







BILL DROCK'S BREAKFAST. Page 32.
Frontispiece.



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BILL BROOK & INTEREST

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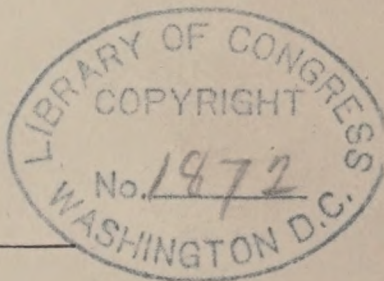
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BILL DROCK'S INVESTMENT.

BY

MARY DWINELL CHELLIS,

AUTHOR OF "MOLLY'S BIBLE," "EFFIE WINGATE'S
WORK," ETC.



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Standard Series of Temperance Tales.

VOL. 1. BILL DROCK'S INVESTMENT.

“ II. THE OLD DOCTOR'S SON.

“ III. (IN PREPARATION.)

“ IV. “ “

WILL BROOK'S INTEREST

BY WILLIAM BROOK

CHAPTER I


It was a fine morning in the month of May, and the sun was shining brightly on the faces of the children who were playing in the garden. The mother was sitting on the bench, and the father was standing by the gate, looking at the clock. The clock was a large, old-fashioned clock, and it was ticking away the minutes. The children were playing with their toys, and the mother was watching them. The father was looking at the clock, and he was thinking of the time. The clock was a large, old-fashioned clock, and it was ticking away the minutes. The children were playing with their toys, and the mother was watching them. The father was looking at the clock, and he was thinking of the time.

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BILL DROCK'S INVESTMENT.

CHAPTER I.

Under the pines, where the sun looked down,
Flecking with light all the carpet brown;
Lulled by the music of summer's breeze,
Fairy-like whispers, through stately trees,
There slept a child, on whose tear-stained face
Pain and suffering had left their trace.

HE faintest summer breeze swept through the tall pines, bearing from them a health-giving aroma, and making strange, weird music, like the rush of far off waters, or the sighs of mighty hearts, struggling to burst the chains which bind them.

Since first the sun had risen in the east, it had glowed and burned as a furnace, seven times heated. Man and beast were fain to shelter themselves from its scorching rays, while the very grass grew dry and crisp. Flowers drooped, and even the leaves of the forest trees rolled themselves together as tiny scrolls. Only the grand old pines seemed to rejoice in this fervid heat, as the brown carpet beneath them, was flecked, here and there, with the light which found its way through their swaying branches.

For miles, one might wander where the footfall would give back no sound, and where, to the uninitiated, there was nothing to mark the progress made. Lost in this belt of woodland, one would need rare sagacity to extricate himself, and yet, on the afternoon my story opens, a negro, panting beneath the burden he carried, threaded his way, among these pines, as carelessly as though treading the streets of a familiar city.

Pausing, occasionally, to rest, he gave utterance to some characteristic expletives. Toting supplies for three was no child's play on a day like this, as the beaded drops on his forehead testified. Just a mile he had come, from the old turnpike, and there was quite a distance between him and the camp, where he acted as purveyor general, cook, and man of all work. He would have been glad to sit down and rest, but the thought of those who waited, quickened his steps. Yet, directly, he fell into the old pace, muttering to himself, "Mighty hot, and them boys can wait!"

He toiled on slowly, until near the camp, then he stopped, threw down his burden, and turned aside to examine an object which had arrested his attention. "Mighty!" he whispered, between his clenched teeth, and knelt down by the prostrate form of a boy, who was all unconscious of his presence. Our sable friend, Bill Drock, was seldom astonished or

surprised ; but here was a case beyond his comprehension.

Traces of tears were upon the boy's cheeks, and around his mouth were lines of suffering. His hands, even in sleep, were clasped closely, as though in his last waking moments, he had striven to control some painful emotion.

An old, well-patched jacket lay beside him ; but his shirt was sadly torn, revealing one shoulder, blistered by the sun. Other marks there were too, made by a whip or rattan, which now showed purple and livid.

Bill Drock bent lower that he might be quite sure of this ; and the boy moved uneasily, an expression of pain flitting across his face. Still the negro continued his scrutiny. There was a mystery here he proposed to solve.

At length the child, for child he really was, opened his eyes and gazed wildly around. Large, hazel eyes, they were, tender and ap-

pealing, despite the fear they now expressed.

“Had a good sleep, boy?”

“Yes,” was the reply. “I forgot I was tired and lonesome.”

“And was you tired and lonesome, before you went to sleep?”

“Yes, and hungry, too. I’ve lost my way.”

“Where do you want to go?”

“I don’t know. Somewhere. I can work and earn some money.”

“Mighty!” exclaimed Bill Drock. “You don’t look much like earning money. Why, you ain’t much more than a baby, any way. You ought to be at home with your mother. That’s the place for such a boy as you.”

Instantly the long lashes drooped, and sobs shook the frame of the little way-worn traveler. He covered his face with his hands, and turned, so that his back and shoulders were still more exposed; and there was

another ejaculation, from his companion, still more expressive.

“Where did you come from?” he asked, directly; and was then obliged to wait for an answer, until he grew impatient. “Them boys” at the camp would want him.

Nothing ever moved this coarse, rough man, like the tears of a child. He had, himself, some sad memories, reaching far back to the days when he should have been loved and sheltered; but when, alas, he had been forced to fight his way unaided.

“Won’t you send me back, if I tell you?” interrogated the boy, who had not been unmindful of the question asked.

“I never ’ll send you where you don’t want to go,” was the answer. “You won’t catch this chap doing that, unless you’ve run away from your mother.”

Another burst of tears, and another hiding of the face. “My mother is dead.” This

said, a long silence followed, while Bill Drock wiped the tears from his own eyes.

He bethought him, then, that the boy was hungry. There were some crackers in the bag he had brought from the village. "Poor fodder," he called them, but they were better than nothing, and he was unwilling to take the boy to the camp, until he had learned something of his history. "Would you like something to eat?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, I am so hungry."

The negro did not wait for another word. Lost from sight a moment, he returned, with a dozen crackers, which the boy seized eagerly. He must have been hungry. All other feeling seemed lost in the pleasure of satisfying his craving for food.

"You'll want some water now," said his companion.

"I should like some."

"Then you stay here till I come back.

I'm going on, and I'll bring you some water, if you'll promise not to run away."

"How soon will you come? I must find the road before dark; because —" and here the child's voice was lost in a sob.

"There, now, don't cry any more. I shan't be gone long, and I'll look after you, to-night. There's worse places, to sleep in, than these woods. You just lay still where you are, and I'll see what can be done for you. Shall I find you here?"

"Yes, sir, I'll wait for you."

It was not often any one addressed Bill Drock as "sir;" and this may have had some effect upon his movements, which were, certainly, much more rapid than they had been before he caught sight of the sleeping boy. The camp reached, something was said in regard to his long absence.

"Tote that bag, three miles, and see how fast you'll go! Mighty hot day, Mr. Parsons. Besides, I had some business to attend to."

“What kind of business?” asked a young man, reclining upon a couch made of the fragrant pine boughs. “I should think you had enough on hand here, without looking for more.”

“I didn’t look for more. It came in my way, and I must take it up. ’Twas duty.”

“That is enough. Never shirk duty;” and with a smile at the consequential air assumed, Hugh Parsons took up a book and commenced to read.

Seated by a rude table, was an older man, who wrote rapidly, scarcely heeding the conversation, and giving no heed to the new comer after he first entered the hut. He was too much accustomed to hear his brother talk with this humble friend, to be disturbed by the sound of their voices; but, presently, Bill stood before him, in the attitude of waiting.

“Well,” he said, laying down his pen. “Any letters?”

"Yes, sir," replied Bill, taking quite a package from his pocket. "I forgot all about them. There's a boy out here, hungry and tired."

"Out here! Where do you mean? In the woods?"

"Yes, sir, about forty rods off, and the worst sight I ever see. His back and shoulders are blistered, and marked like they tell about down South."

"What's that, Bill?" exclaimed Hugh, springing from his couch, with an eagerness which sent the blood rushing to his usually pale face.

"Be careful," said his brother, kindly. "Don't excite yourself. Remember you are not quite well, yet," he added, as the flush faded from his cheek.

"But I want to hear about the boy."

"Then go back to your bed, and I'll tell you. I shan't talk, while you stand there,

looking like a ghost ;” and Bill spoke as one having authority. No stress of circumstances would have compelled him to talk, until the invalid had complied with his conditions.

Hugh once more upon the couch, he gave a description of the boy in few words.

“It is very strange,” said William Parsons. “This is the last place I should expect to find a boy. He must have lost his way.”

“Yes, sir, that’s what he said ; but he cried so I couldn’t find out much else about him. I promised to carry him some water, and it’s time I went back. I am going to bring him over here.”

“So do, as soon as possible,” said Hugh. “I want to see him myself. Why don’t you go to him, William ?”

“Because Bill understands the case better than I do ; and the boy will speak more freely, if there is but one to listen. Take the boy here as soon as he is willing to come, and

we will endeavor to help him. I didn't look for an adventure in the old pine forest."

It required a few minutes for the negro to dispose of his groceries satisfactorily, after which he drew from the well a bucket of sparkling water. Then, with a small tin pail, filled with the cool liquid, he started on his errand of mercy.

The boy had not stirred from the spot where he was left. There he lay, watching and waiting for his new found friend.

Hunger and thirst appeased, a wan smile broke over his face, as he asked, "Do you live here in the woods?"

"I live here now, though 'taint my home. There's two young men out here in the camp. You can go there with me, and stay to-night."

"Perhaps they won't want me; and I ought to go on."

"On where? You need rest, and perhaps if you tell me your story, I can help you.

I'm only a poor man ; but I've helped some folks before now. Can't you tell me where you came from ? ”

The boy whispered low the name of the town he had left. “ I came away in the night, and there didn't anybody know,” he added. — “ Mother died, and father—— ” Here he paused, and seemed debating whether it was best to proceed. “ Father used to whip me after he'd been drinking, and I thought I'd come away.”

This was the mystery. There was a drunken father ; curse enough for any child. No wonder that he came away, even though he knew not whether he went.

The memory of what he had suffered caused another fit of weeping, and poor Bill, after several awkward attempts at consolation, broke down himself.

“ Don't cry,” said the boy ; “ it don't hurt you.”

"Don't it, though? Something hurts me. You come over to the camp now."

"Perhaps they won't want me," was the reply, in a tone of apprehension.

"Trust me for that. I told them something about you, and they said, 'Bring him along.' Mr. Parsons would be glad to see you, any way. He's kind of a minister, and knows the right thing to say to everybody. Come," and he took hold of the boy's hand, to assist him to rise.

A half subdued cry of pain escaped the boy, as he said, "Let me get up alone."

This was no easy task. His limbs were stiff, and every motion was attended with suffering. He fell back heavily.

"Now you just let me take you right up, and carry you. You won't be no more weight than a baby; and I'm used to toting."

The child made another effort to rise. This time, he stood upon his feet, and before

he could remonstrate, Bill Drock had taken him in his arms, and was striding towards the camp.

“There’s my jacket, and my bundle. Mother’s Bible is in that ; I can’t leave it.”

“I’ll come back after all we leave behind. Don’t be afraid. I’m going to look out for you.”

The camp, as it was called, consisted of a log house, a smaller one adjoining, used as store-rooms, and a rough shanty of boards. This last was the negro’s apartment, where no one presumed to intrude. There was a stone chimney, with a capacious fire-place, around which hung his cooking utensils. A heap of boughs was his bed ; while for chairs and table he had little need. Just outside the door was a well, sunk years before, by the choppers, for whose accommodation the log house was built.

This tract of timber land had not reached

the perfection of its growth. Only some of the larger trees were cut down from time to time ; and the camp would have been seldom occupied, but for those who came seeking health and strength.

William and Hugh Parsons were spending the summer here, the former studying, writing, and making the most of every hour, while the latter read, idled, or slept, as his mood might dictate. They had been fortunate in securing the services of Bill Drock, who knew every inch of the forest, and was skilled in rustic cooking.

Hugh had already improved, during the month spent in camp ; yet he was far from well. Every over-exertion or excitement was followed by the ominous flush, and hollow cough. He was coughing as the boy and his bearer came within hearing.

“ Oh, that sounds like mother. She used to cough so, and the doctor said it killed her. Who is it ? ”

“It’s Mister Hugh. But he’s a heap better than when he came here, and I’m going to cure him all up.”

“Be you a doctor?” asked the child.

“Not much of one. I never studied physic, and I don’t know anything about the things big doctors give to sick folks; but I’ve done some jobs in my day. Guess I can bring Mister Hugh round, if he don’t get tired of this country too soon. But there, you hain’t told me your name, and I must call you something besides boy.”

“My name is Philip Melvin. My mother called me Phil.”

There was just time enough for this to be said, before Bill Drock passed the door of the larger boy’s house.

“Here, Bill,” called Hugh Parsons, “I want you to bring that boy in here. I am waiting to receive company. William, why don’t you insist upon it?” he added, as the

negro strode on, without appearing to hear what had been said.

“Let him have his own way,” was the reply. “Bill knows what he is about, and don’t fancy interference.”

“Supposing he don’t. There are others in the same condition, of whom I am one,” responded Hugh.

“A fact of which I have been aware,” said his brother, quietly; and yet he was himself impatient to see the boy.

Meanwhile, Philip Melvin had been laid down carefully in the kitchen of the establishment, glad to escape meeting the strangers.

“There, now, I’m going to give you some supper, bime bye, and fix you up for the night,” said Bill. “I’ll go back and get the things we left, and you needn’t be afraid of anything while I’m gone. I guess your troubles are pretty much over; so don’t cry any more.”

This speech, intended to be consolatory, had the effect to open the fountain of tears, but Phil made a brave effort to restrain its overflow, and succeeded in so doing, until he was left alone. Then, thinking of his dear mother, whom he had seen laid in the grave but two days before, and of the darling baby sister, whose cold lips he had kissed ere the coffin lid was closed over them, it was impossible to be brave or calm. He was but a child, and a child's grief must have its way.

He did not think much of the present or future. The wretched past engrossed him. Perhaps he wondered a little how his father felt towards him, now that he was away ; yet the scars he bore had been inflicted too recently to have the giver's hand seem other than it was that of a brutal master. His mother's Bible was the only thing in all the wide world left to comfort him ; and this his friend had promised to bring.

But there, beneath the old pine, lay jacket and bundle, just as he had left them, while Bill Drock talked with his employers.

“I thought I'd better carry the boy right home,” he said, in answer to Hugh's complaints. “You haint any room for him, and I have. Besides, I've got to doctor him, and it's handier to have him close by.”

“You'll have your hands full with two patients,” said Hugh. “But you didn't tell us he was sick.”

“I don't know as he *is* sick, exactly; but he's lame, and his back is awful. Why, he couldn't walk any more than a baby.”

“Did you learn any thing more in regard to him?” asked William Parsons.

“His mother is dead, and his father is a drunkard,” was the laconic reply. “He says his father whipped him, and he carries the marks.”

“Now, Mister Hugh, I'm going sure,”

exclaimed Bill, after telling all he had heard, and venturing upon some conclusions, which afterwards proved to be not far from the truth.

“Well, go, if you will, and if I find my way to your kitchen, blame innate curiosity, and not me.”

“Just wait for that till I get back, and the boy has got used to his quarters. I promised him there shouldn't anybody come while I was gone.”

“All right, then. Hurry on, and I'll endeavor to keep the peace, though it will be hard work, and decidedly against nature. Bill carries a high hand.”

This last remark was addressed to his brother, who answered, “The boy is his protege, not ours. You must learn to possess your soul in patience.”

“An oft repeated lesson, brother. Shall I ever learn it?” and the voice was modulated to a softer tone.

"I trust so, Hugh, and that without too stern discipline. He who can do his best, and calmly wait for answer and return, has made success so sure, he need not doubt."

"Your favorite motto, William; and judged by that, your success in life is doubly sure."

"As I count success, I believe it is, and can bide my time."

"Sermonizing always," exclaimed Hugh, after a short silence. "There is nobody like you. One might think it the pleasantest thing in the world for you to be here in this old log hut, while I know that you had other plans for your vacation. It is too bad that I should always be a drag upon you."

The elder brother turned at this, and answered with his eyes. Words were not needed.

Presently Bill appeared in sight, and the conversation drifted back to the subject upon which it had commenced.

"I guess I'll call you before long," said the negro, as he passed.

Phil was sobbing bitterly when his host returned. He suffered from physical as well as mental pain. Oh, for his mother's gentle hand and loving sympathy !

As yet, Bill Drock had not spoken to the boy of his bruised and blistered shoulders, although they had seemed so dreadful.

"Mr. Parsons wants to see you," he said. "You'd better have him come right in. He's good, and loves the same Bible your mother did. That's what we all do, too. Mister Hugh and me, besides ; but he knows best about it. You'll feel better to have him talk with you. Shall I tell him to come ?"

"Yes, sir," answered Phil, reaching out for his jacket.

"Why, child, you don't want that on. It will make your back worse to be so warm. I'm going to dress it with leaves bime by."

“But I don’t want him to see,” urged Phil. “It hurts so, and father did it. He’d been drinking, and I wouldn’t go to buy him any more rum. Mother told me not to.”

“Well, we’ll see about it. But I can’t have you putting on that hot jacket. ’Twould be the worst thing you could do.”

— William Parsons was expecting the summons which he made haste to obey, and Philip Melvin looked up into a kindly face. The negro did not return ; so there was only this good man sitting by the low couch.

Neither could afterwards have told how confidence was established ; but in the next half hour, Phil had given a graphic outline of his life. It was such a relief to talk to one who seemed to understand how hard and bitter it had been.

“It wasn’t wrong to come away, was it ?” he asked, in conclusion.

“I think not,” was the reply.

“Then you won't send me back.”

“No, never,” answered the young man, decidedly.

“Because if you did, father would almost kill me, and I should hate him, though mother told me I ought to pray for him. I try to, but —” and an involuntary motion of his hand showed that he thought of the blows he had received.

“Don't think of that now,” said the boy's companion. “Tell me what you would like for supper.”

“Can you have what you want, here in the woods?”

“Usually. We are wise enough to want what we can have,” replied William Parsons, laughing. “Isn't that a good way?”

“Yes, sir, and I should like just what you do for supper.”

“And you shall have it. Then, after a good night's sleep, you will feel pretty well,

and can make us a visit. How should you like that?"

"I should like to come and see you. But aint there somebody with you?"

"Yes, my brother. You and he will be good friends."

"Is he like you?"

"You can judge when you have seen him. He is not so old as I am."

"And have you got a mother?"

"No, Phil, we have neither father nor mother. They both died before Hugh was as old as you are now."

"Then perhaps my mother has seen your mother before this time," said the boy, eagerly. "Mother used to say she should see Nellie in heaven. Isn't your mother in heaven?"

"I trust so, child."

"Perhaps they know all about us, and can look right down here. Mother said she

should know if I was a bad boy. I wanted her to take me to heaven with her."

"You will go to her when your work here is done," responded Mr. Parsons. "I hope we shall all go."

"Will that black man go, too?"

"Yes, he is a Christian."

"I knew he was real good, when he took me up in his arms. He said I might stay here to-night. But what shall I do in the morning?" exclaimed Phil, with a troubled voice.

"I will tell you what to do," was the kind answer. "You needn't think anything about it."

"Mighty hot, Mr. Parsons!" said Bill Drock, entering at that moment, throwing down a handful of leaves, and wiping the perspiration from his forehead. "I've had a tramp, but I found what I wanted;" and taking up the leaves, he began to bruise them

in his horny palms. This done, he laid them in an old earthen dish, and poured water upon them.

Never mother dressed a wound more carefully than were these cool, moist leaves, applied to Phil Melvin's inflamed shoulders, and never was child more grateful than he. William Parsons went out when this was done, and the boy asked for his mother's Bible.

"I want to read a chapter before I go to sleep," he said.

"You must have supper before you go to sleep," replied his friend. "I am going to make up another bed for you, too."

Supper was sure to be what he liked, since he was unaccustomed to luxuries, and thought enough of any thing a feast. He ate it with a grateful heart, and read a chapter, while his bed was prepared. Fresh leaves replaced those which had become heated; and the

boy slept before the shades of evening had fallen round him.

By this time, Hugh Parsons had heard all which his brother had learned of the child. "What will you do with him?" he asked.

"I have hardly thought of that," was the reply. "Bill must be consulted, and light will come with the morning."

Rest came with the night; rest more perfect than dwellers in the city may know; and again the August sun looked down on that far stretch of woodland.

Bill Drock was early astir; but the other inmate of his lodge slept soundly until he began making preparations for breakfast. Then the boy sprang up and cried, "Where am I?"

"Here in the woods, with friends. Don't you remember?" asked the smiling cook. "Don't you remember?"

"Oh, yes," answered Phil, "I remember now. Mother died, and I came away. Do you suppose father cares?"

"Can't tell about that. I guess I should care, if I was in his place."

"But he aint like you," said Phil.

"No, he's white, and I'm black."

"I didn't mean that," responded the boy, with a sigh. "He don't care about what you do. He don't read the Bible, nor go to meeting. Sundays he goes fishing. You don't go fishing, do you?"

"No, child," and here, by a dexterous movement, a cake, to which Bill gave the name of "flapjack" was turned in the iron skillet; and the attention of his companion was for the moment absorbed by this.

Philip Melvin, who had been accustomed to see cooking done only by women, thought it strange how this man could have learned to do so many things. Great slices of pork were broiled upon the glowing coals, potatoes drawn from their hiding-place in the hot ashes, eggs boiled, and last, but not least, coffee was "set

boiling." A savory smell filled the shanty, and mingled with the fragrance of the outer air.

Nobody could have convinced Bill Drock that pork was unhealthy ; and few, with appetites sharpened by coming out would have attempted it. The boy, who watched its cooking, thought nothing had ever looked so good ; and even Hugh Parsons was induced to test its merits.

The gentlemen having been served in their house, Bill gave attention to his young guest. A huge block, the face of which was worn smooth by constant use, was all the table of which he could boast, and upon this breakfast for two was arranged.

"Pretty well this morning, aint you?" said the host, as he poured the second bowl of coffee for Phil.

"Yes sir," was the reply. "I feel pretty well, and I guess you've cured my shoulders."

"I thought I could doctor as much as that. There's nothing like the roots and leaves. God puts them here for us. You must have a bath, and then you'll be all right."

"Then will you show me the way to the road?" asked Phil.

"Do you want to go and leave us so soon?" was asked, in reply. "We haint got really acquainted yet. 'Taint often we have company here in the woods."

"Am I company?" exclaimed the boy, a happy wonder in his eyes.

"Of course you be; and you haint seen Mister Hugh at all, yet. Mr. Parsons is going to make up his mind what you'd best do; but you'll stay here to-day at any rate."

A bath, which, judging from its effects, must have possessed some healing qualities, removed the last vestige of fatigue felt by Philip Melvin. His bundle contained a clean shirt, old and patched, yet better than the one

he had worn. With this, and well brushed pants, he presented quite a respectable appearance, as he went to visit William Parsons and his brother.

“Good morning, Philip,” said the former, “I am glad to see you looking so well. Did you have a good sleep?”

“Yes, sir,” was the answer. “I remembered what you told me, and trusted to God to take care of me.”

“That was right. Always remember to do that, and you’ll be likely to prosper.”

“Mother used to say so;” and at this name, sweetest of all a child may speak, a great sob came into the boy’s throat.

“I see I must introduce myself,” now said Hugh, coming forward. “This is the boy Bill found trespassing upon our grounds, and so brought him home for safe keeping.”

But for the laughing tone in which they were uttered, Phil might have been somewhat

alarmed at these words. As it was he looked up, with a smile, and replied, "The black man found me, and took me home. Are you sorry?"

"Sorry! No, indeed. What put that into your head? I'm always glad when good is done, though I'm not much of a Samaritan myself. I'm more like the man who fell among thieves. Do you think you shall like me?"

A hasty glance at the face of the young man, and an answer was quickly given.

"Yes, sir, if you will let me."

"Let you, child. Who ever knew me to refuse a good, honest liking from any one? I take it that you are an honest little fellow."

"Yes, sir. I mean to be honest. I promised mother I would."

Hugh Parsons grew serious at once, and drawing the boy to a seat on the couch, sat down beside him.

Soon a familiar voice called the older brother, and he went out to make one of the committee which should decide what was best for Philip Melvin.

“There must be a stir about him by this time; but ’twould be a sin to send him back to his father,” said Bill Drock. “He shan’t go, if I can help it. Fathers that drink rum no business to have children.”

“But you know his father can claim him,” replied Mr. Parsons. “Something must be done to prevent that, if we would really benefit the boy. If his story is true, there will be no difficulty in doing this.”

“You don’t doubt that child’s story, do you?” asked the black man.

“Not at all,” was the reply. “He has an honest face, and his appearance confirms all that he says. It would be easy to ascertain the facts in the case, as we are but twenty miles from his home. If there is any excite-

ment in regard to his disappearance, news of it will have reached the village before now."

"I might go over and see," responded Bill. "I meant to have fish for dinner, and the brook is on the other side of the woods, but if you think you can get along, I'll put off fishing till to-morrow."

"I *do* think we can get along. The sooner this business is attended to, the better it will be."

"Then I'll go right along when I've got Mister Hugh's bath ready. 'Twon't do to omit that, now the water is hot."

Mister Hugh was pleasantly engaged, but "the doctor's" orders were imperative, and to the kitchen he went, there to wash and receive strength.

Bill Drock did not go to the village as he expected. When he emerged from the woods, swinging a tin pail, which he carried to give

him an appearance of business, he saw a white covered wagon in the distance, and sat down to wait for its approach.

“Hallo, there, Bill! How are you?” shouted the owner of the wagon. “Want any of my wares?”

“That depends upon what they are,” was the reply.

“Gone into camp again, they say.”

“Yes, camp life suits me, when I have good company. What’s the news up your way? Anybody robbed or murdered?”

“Ain’t sure about that,” answered the butcher, reining in his horse. “I heard a pretty hard story, yesterday, about a man further up the river. Some folks think he killed his boy, though they can’t find the body. Any way, the boy’s gone, and I’m glad of it.”

“What’s the man’s name?” asked Bill, careful not to betray too much curiosity.

“Philip Melvin; the worst drunkard, and the best workman in the county. His wife died only a few days ago, and she was as good as he is bad. The whole town is in a stir, and there's been some talk of arresting the man. But the most they can prove is that he was in the habit of beating this boy.”

“Hard case, ain't it?” said the negro.

“Yes, 'tis,” was the response. “But rum puts the devil into a man, and it must show out some way.”

“Do you suppose the boy is dead?” asked Bill.

“No. I believe he run away. I thought I got track of him once; but if I did, I lost it again.”

“How does his father feel about him?”

“Pretty bad, if reports are true. He owns he whipped the boy after they went home from the funeral, and says he don't know

anything about him since then. If you find a little chap here in the woods, just take good care of him, will you?"

"Trust me for that," was the hearty answer. "If I do any thing else, my name ain't Bill Drock. Now, let's see what you've got in your cart. Something good, or nothing."

The man knew this before being told, and, accordingly, produced his best pieces of meat, from which a selection was soon made.

"Well, I didn't come out to meet you, but it's lucky for me that I happened to. Now, I've got my pail full, and shan't have to go to the village," said Bill, plunging into the woods.

He had heard what he wished to know, and was anxious to report. Forgetful of the heat, he hastened on, and, fortunately, met William Parsons before reaching the camp. The young man considered for a moment,

after listening to the story, and then said, "I should like to see Mr. Melvin. It is only right that he should know his boy is safe."

"Do you suppose he cares?" was the half-indignant question which followed this remark.

"He cares for his own safety at least; and it must be that he has some love for his child."

"I believe most anything you say, Mr. Parsons, but I don't believe that," responded Bill, with emphasis. "Such a man don't love anything but liquor. I've lived longer in the world than you have, and seen some things, if I haint been through college."

"Yes, my good friend, we all know that. But we won't stop now, to dispute about this man's affections. I'm not sure but it would be best for me to go up the river, and see him. There is a stage up this afternoon, and something must be done, or Melvin can claim the boy wherever he can find him."

“Well, yes, I guess that is just the thing needed. You can come back to-morrow, and I’ll stick to the camp, while you’re gone. We’ve got enough to eat for two days.”

“No danger of starving where you are,” responded William Parsons. “You have proved yourself a first rate cook, and I am inclined to trust your medical knowledge. Hugh is improving, and I expect you will cure him entirely.”

“I shall keep on trying,” said the gratified doctor. “And now we’d best go along, and have our dinner in good season, so you needn’t miss the stage. You won’t tell the boy where you’re going.”

“No, I don’t wish him to know. I left him talking with Hugh, and smiling through his tears. He must have had a good mother.”

“Yes, sir. I hardly ever see a good boy, who had a bad mother. That Bible, too, tells the story. It’s been read till it’s most worn out.”

If the breakfast had been good, the dinner had been better ; steak, broiled to a turn, with roasted potatoes, being the principal dish. No one would have accused Hugh Parsons of being an invalid, as he did more than justice to the food before him.

“ Oh, give me the woods forever ! ” he exclaimed. “ There is but one drawback.”

“ And what is that ? ” asked his brother.

“ Our funds would fail to provide sufficient nourishment. Why, I eat like an animal.”

“ And are you not an animal ? ” was the laughing response.

“ I used to think I was an intellectual being ; but my intellect having descended to my stomach, it must be that I am only an animal.”

“ Good breadth of forehead remaining, nevertheless,” answered William. “ Brains will again assert their sway when occasion demands. Your health is improving rapidly.”

“Yes, thanks to Bill and the breath of the pines, two of the best physicians in the world. You may expect soon to hear me startle the echoes. But the boy, William,” added Hugh. “Be sure you keep him from the clutches of his father. I wouldn’t have him go back to that brute for ten years of my life. There’s the making of a man in him.”

Phil dreamed not how strong was the hold he had upon the sympathy and friendship of these brothers, all the stronger that he did not presume upon it.

The afternoon stage received an additional passenger on its way; a young man, with light valise, and evidently intent upon business. Riding outside, William Parsons entered into conversation with the driver, and soon learned that the story Bill had heard in the morning was not exaggerated. Philip Melvin senior was worse than his child had represented; more brutal and besotted.

“Some folks think he killed his boy,” said the driver, when speaking of him. “But things don’t look that way to me. The boy may have wandered off and got lost in the woods. I could get lost, myself, in half an hour. A pretty lonesome place; but dying in peace, if ’tis alone, aint so hard as being knocked round by such a man as Melvin. Every body’s glad the little chap’s got out of his reach.”

“He may be found yet,” responded Mr. Parsons.

“I haint a doubt of it. He’s only ten years old, too young for a long tramp; and the whole country’s on the lookout for him. Melvin didn’t tell the boy was gone till yesterday, but by last night there was quite a stir, and the old house was searched. There was some talk about the body being thrown into the river; but the river’s a quarter of a mile off, and there’s no use thinking of that.”

“ Was the boy like his father ? ”

“ Like that old drunkard ? ” was the exclamation which greeted this question. “ No, indeed. He was like what his mother was when she was young, I reckon. Phil was smart, honest, and the brightest scholar in school. Melvin was proud of him, and had good reason.”

William Parsons could have told a story in return ; but he chose to keep his own counsel, and the driver, who never lost an opportunity for exercising his powers of speech, talked of the weather, farming and crops, occasionally reverting to the topic of general interest. At length, failing to elicit a satisfactory response, he turned to his companion with a direct question.

“ Camping out this summer, aint you ? ”

“ Yes,” was the laconic reply.

“ And I suppose you like it.”

“ I have found it very pleasant,” answered Mr. Parsons.

"I used to like it, myself," said the driver. "But a logging-camp aint much like yours, with Bill Drock to do the cooking, and keep everything straight. I worked at lumbering a few winters, and got pretty well used up."

"Lumbering must be hard work."

"It is ; but it's hard drinking, more than hard work, that uses up lumber men. I found that out by experience. I laid out one night, because I was too drunk to find my way back to camp, and have had the rheumatism to pay for it ever since. 'Twas a warmish night, in spring, or I should froze to death. I thought that was about enough ; so I swore off, and haint dranked a drop since."

"It would be a good thing if there was a general swearing off," remarked an elderly man, who had taken but small part in the conversation.


"That's a fact," was the hearty response. "There's no telling where a man will fetch up, when he begins to drink."

At length, when they had reached their destination, he exclaimed, "Here we are at our journey's end. That's my house, over at the left, among the maples, and here, at the right, is Connecticut river; to my mind, the finest river in the country."

A crack of the long whip emphasized this, and the horses, knowing what was expected of them, dashed up to the village hotel in fine style.

CHAPTER II.

A mother's prayers. It matters not
How far we stray, how dark our lot;
Though cold the lips, and still the heart
Which in these prayers have borne a part:
For each one registered in Heaven,
Some blessing unto us is given.

 GLANCE, a word, the swerving from
our path for a moment, and straight-
way the tenor of our lives is changed,
while others linked with us in the
great scale of humanity, are blessed or cursed,
as Providence allows.

Twelve years before my story opens, Mary
Reed was driving home from a neighbor's,
when her horse took fright and resisted all her
efforts at control. Alarmed, and fast losing

all self-possession, she was only too grateful when a firm hand seized the horse and held him without apparent effort.

Here was the turning-point in the life of this young girl. The whirr of a bird's wing had startled the horse, and given Philip Melvin an opportunity to display his coolness and strength. It was the first time he had met Mary Reed, to whom, but for this, he might have remained a stranger; and the acquaintance thus commenced was continued, until drawn to him by an influence, she, in her sympathy, did not seek to analyze, she became his wife. A good workman, he provided well for her during the early days of their married life, although even then she missed the tenderness she had expected to receive.

Philip, named for her husband, was her first born child, fair and winsome as ever gladdened a young mother's heart. As time

went by, other children were given to her arms ; but they died too soon to know the sorrow which oppressed her. Nellie was the last ; the sister Phil had loved so well.

“ Wasn't it wrong for God to take her away from us ? ” asked the boy, with streaming eyes. “ It seems almost wicked, when we loved her so.”

“ No, my dear, it was right ; ” answered the weeping mother. “ Nellie is happy now. She can never be sick again, never cold or hungry ; and some day we shall go and live with her.”

“ Don't go till I do, will you, mother ? ” then cried Phil, a new fear taking possession of his heart, as he looked into the pale face, and listened to the hollow cough he had hardly noticed before.

Three months more, and at the close of a summer's day, far away from her childhood's home, Mary Reed lay dying. Kind neighbors

stood around and wiped the death damp from her brow. The clergyman prayed for the soul about to take its flight, and for the husband and child who would be left.

A few, maudlin tears coursed down the cheeks of the husband, too much intoxicated to feel anything like real grief. But the boy lay beside his mother, his cheek pressed close to hers, and his arm around her neck. The women in attendance protested against this, but she would not have him removed. So she died ; and still her child kept his place until convinced that he must go away.

His father made some show of trying to comfort him, and uttered some expressions of sorrow at their mutual loss ; while every word made Phil more wretched. He was old enough to know that hardship and unkindness had caused his mother's death ; and knowing this, he almost hated him who had inflicted them upon her.

How the day and nights, which intervened before the funeral, were passed, he could hardly tell. He had but one feeling. He was orphaned. No loud wailing testified to his grief. As one who watched him said, "He didn't cry like a child, but like a man."

At the funeral, Mr. Melvin was sober, and manifested some regret for the wife whom he had really murdered as though he had put a knife to her throat. Yet no sooner was he alone with his boy, that evening, than he took a dram from the old brown jug in the cupboard.

There was not enough to satisfy him. Some of it had been used for other purposes than drinking, and he commenced to swear. Phil made no reply; indeed seemed scarcely to hear what was said, until roused by a command to "go over to Brown's and get the jug filled."

"O, father, I can't do that," was his an-



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swer. "Mother told me never to buy any more rum, and I promised her I wouldn't."

Already excited, vexed with the child who had shrank from him, even when standing by an open grave, Mr. Melvin repeated his command, with an oath, threatening to flog Phil within an inch of his life, if he refused to obey.

"But I can't do it, father. I promised mother."

"Curses on you and your mother!" shouted the now infuriated man, seizing a rattan, and proceeding to put his threat in execution.

Had outcries followed the blows, he might have continued until his rage had spent itself; but instead of these there were only a firmer compression of the boy's lips, and a more ghastly pallor of the child's face.

The words he had heard, the curses, had taken from Phil all sense of physical pain. He would have died without a groan, and

perhaps his father feared this ; for he walked to the other side of the room and sat down.

Soon Phil crawled up stairs, and throwing himself upon his low bed, thought, thought, until his brain reeled, and for a little while, he seemed to sleep. When he awoke to consciousness, there was no sound to be heard. His father had found more of the fiery drink, and would not trouble him again that night.

Gradually the boy recalled all which had passed ; blows, curses, hunger and cold. He knew there were happy homes, where these came not, and wondered if in some such home he might not earn a right to share the humblest corner. Was there not, somewhere, a woman like his mother, who would let him love and serve her ?

He began to feel the smart and pain of the blows he had just received, and scalding tears coursed down his cheeks.

His decision was made. He would go

away. He knew not where ; but anywhere to be out of his father's reach. A rough box contained his treasures ; his mother's Bible, a few other books, and some toys given him long ago. Repairing his clothes was the last work done by the hands, now folded over a pulseless breast ; and from these he selected what he thought he should most need, tying them in a cotton handkerchief. He dared not encumber himself with much, yet the precious Bible must not be left behind.

Just as the moon rose, a little past midnight, he glided from the house, and turned his steps to where a fresh mound of earth marked the last resting-place of his mother. Here he lingered, unmindful that time was passing, until the crowing of a cock warned him that morning was near.

Out into the highway he went, not resolutely, but in a sort of despair, terrible for one so young to feel. When the first faint light

appeared in the East, he quickened his steps, fearful that he might be seen by some early riser.

As the day advanced, he turned aside into clumps of bushes, or sought shelter in the forest skirting the road.

A piece of bread, snatched from the kitchen table, was the only food he had taken, and this was but small provision against hunger. At length, just before night, he ventured up to a lonely house, and asked for something to eat. The woman who granted his request, wished to know why he was not at home; but he managed to evade her questions without telling a falsehood.

That night he slept in an old barn, where by the waning light he read a chapter from his mother's Bible, and kneeling down asked God to keep him safely. For a time, after he awoke next morning, it seemed to him that he must be dreaming; but when able to com-

prehend his situation, he sprang up quickly, anxious to increase the distance between himself and his father.

He felt the cravings of hunger, but dared not ask for food ; so eating some berries which he found by the wayside and drinking from the fountains, at which the panting horses slaked their thirst, he struggled on. He entered the pine forest, keeping within its shadow, to avoid the passers by, yet careful not to lose sight of the road. Forced to rest he fell asleep, from sheer exhaustion, and upon awaking in a bewildered state, plunged deeper into the forest. It was then he lost his way, but not quite losing faith in God, lay down, with his bundle for a pillow. What followed my readers already know, and we turn to the wretched father.

The morning after his wife's funeral, Mr. Melvin rose in a sullen, gloomy mood, went to the cupboard and again drained the old

brown jug; then looked to see what had been left from last night's supper. There was not much, but what there was, he ate, without thinking that his child might be hungry.

The rattan lay upon the floor, just where it had fallen from his hand; and this reminded him of the blows he had inflicted. He remembered, too, the boy's strange appearance, and going to the foot of the stairs, called his name loudly. There was no reply; and he called again, more loudly than before. Still no reply; and, with an oath, he began to mount the creaking stairs.

Unable to stand erect in the low attic, he muttered forth his displeasure, as he groped his way to the bed. He was ready to seize the sleeper roughly; and started back in alarm, when he found the bed unoccupied.

"Phil, Phil," he cried, in a softened tone, at the same time peering into the dark corners of the loft. "Come out. I won't hurt you. I want you. Come. There's a good boy."

But the good boy did not appear; and Mr. Melvin commenced a vigorous search. Satisfied, at last, that no boy was to be found there, he returned to the kitchen, and called again. The outbuildings were examined with no satisfactory result.

He was thirsty, and there was money in his pocket, but he would not leave the house to purchase the drink his appetite craved. He thought Phil could not have gone far, and would soon return; so he waited, sometimes angry, and sometimes fearful. During the day, two or three neighbors called, and, to their enquiries, he answered that Phil was upstairs asleep, and he did not wish to disturb him. No one thought of doubting this, and the man being surly, he was soon left alone.

By night he was thoroughly alarmed, yet would not betray his secret. Phil was gone. There was no doubt of that; and after long, restless hours spent in trying to find some

means of finding him, there seemed no alternative but to make the matter public.

The clergyman, Mr. Wells, called early in the morning, and expressed a wish to see the boy. At this, Mr. Melvin acknowledged the truth.

“And you made no effort to find him?” was the reply.

“I looked every where I could think of,” responded the father.

“And you really know nothing of him,” said Mr. Wells, looking his companion full in the face.

“No, sir. What should I know. I told you I hadn't seen him since night before last.”

“Was there any trouble between you?” questioned the visitor.

“None, in particular. He didn't do something I told him, and I struck him two or three times, not hard enough to make him cry

though. He went up stairs to bed well enough."

"Mr. Melvin, do you ever stop to consider what will be the end of your present course? Your wife died before her time. Are you guiltless of her death? She has gone home to heaven, and for aught I know, her child may have joined her."

"No, no, don't say that," exclaimed Mr. Melvin. "Phil can't be dead. I didn't kill him. I only struck him two or three times; and I've whipped him a good deal worse than that, before."

This confession of cruelty was made without thought of its effect, and only served to confirm Mr. Wells' suspicions. Some further questions, eliciting nothing satisfactory, and the visitor left.

Before night, the town was in a state of excitement. The selectmen took the matter in hand, and there was a general search,

while the wildest rumors were told and heard. When the stage drove up to the village tavern, the third day after Phil Melvin's disappearance, the piazza was crowded with men and boys, all eager for news.

"Hain't heard a word," said the driver in reply to the voices which greeted him. "Hain't you got anything to tell yourselves?"

"No; we've hunted and hunted, and hain't found so much as a lock of the boy's hair."

William Parsons looked round upon the group, for a moment, and then passed into the house, the landlord following. "I wish to see a clergyman, and shall be obliged if you will direct me to one," said the new comer.

"Our minister, Mr. Wells, is right out here, and I'll call him, sir," was the quick reply. "You see, there's a boy missing, and the people get together to talk it over. We don't generally have such a crowd round here."

Mr. Wells came in, and although an entire stranger, met the young man cordially. In ten minutes the mystery of the day was solved, and there remained only the necessity of discussing what was best to be done.

"I promised the boy that I wouldn't send him back to his father," said William Parsons. "I must keep that promise, at all events. Phil would rather die than come back."

"It's not strange," replied Mr. Wells. "There is his father coming down the street, certainly not a man to attract any one;" and as he said this, he pointed to a large, coarse looking man, some distance up the street. "I pity Melvin, vile as he is, and he ought to know that his child is safe."

"Not until he relinquishes all claim upon his child," suggested Mr. Parsons. "Such men are not to be trusted, and Philip has a right to his own life."

"Yes," was the response, "Mrs. Melvin

was a woman who never talked of her troubles, but she told me she had written to her only brother, asking him to befriend her boy when she was gone. I know she expected a letter before she died, and was very anxious in regard to it. If a letter should come addressed to her, under the circumstances, I should take the liberty to open it. If Mr. Reed would take the boy, I am sure that the selectmen would arrange the matter so that Melvin could not interfere. I think I will go to the office, if you will excuse me."

There was a letter for Mrs. Mary Melvin, marked at the town where her brother resided, and in the presence of the post-master Mr. Wells read it, after explaining his reasons for so doing. It was well it had not arrived sooner, since its contents would have given only pain to her for whom they had been written.

Phil could come, if there was nowhere else

for him to go, although the writer thought likely his sister would get well, after all. He had as much as he could do, to take care of his own family, and his children had to help earn their living.

“Anything good for the boy, if he’s ever found?” asked the post-master.

“I’m afraid not,” answered Mr. Wells. “We must club together and do something for him ourselves.”

“That’s so,” remarked an old farmer, who had overheard this last remark. “I’m ready to help, or I’ll take the boy myself, if Melvin’ll give him up.”

“He’ll be obliged to give him up,” said another. “It’s my opinion that boy’s dead, long ago; but if any body’ll find him, I’ll take hold and do my part towards giving him something handsome.”

Much feeling was manifested; but Mr. Wells had seen enough of human nature to

know how evanescent it might be. He reported the contents of Mr. Reed's letter to his new acquaintance, and both decided that a home for Phil must be sought elsewhere.

The selectmen were summoned, and William Parsons having the rare faculty of telling a story in few words, his business was soon understood.

"It's a pretty hard case to ask a man to give up all claim to his own child," said one of the town fathers, whose heart had been somewhat softened towards Melvin by the manifestations of the last few days.

"I know it is," was the reply. "But it is not so bad as that a brutal man should heap abuse upon a child until death is preferred to life."

"Who will be responsible for the support of the boy?" asked another, who, now that the excitement was about to subside, began to count the cost.

As this was what William Parsons had expected, he answered, without hesitation, "I will be responsible, if necessary," thus shaming him who had asked the question.

"I suppose the town could see to that," he said, hurriedly. "We could take the boy from his father on the plea of cruelty, and bind him out to some good man." The very thought of this made Mr. Parsons wince; but he waited to see what might follow.

"Wouldn't it be as well to call Mr. Melvin before Esquire Todd, and have the whole matter settled this afternoon?" now asked Mr. Wells. "It will put an end to the excitement; and that seems desirable."

"Certainly, certainly," answered those in authority, and at once proceeded to act upon the suggestion.

Between abstinence from accustomed stimulant, and anxiety for his child, Mr. Melvin was in a condition to yield to any demands

which might be made upon him. Without attempting to deny that he had often been severe, he said he "didn't mean to abuse Phil." He wanted to do what was right by the boy.

"You don't think he's dead," at length he said, so piteously that William Parsons could no longer withhold the truth.

Then it was wonderful to see how the expression of the father's face changed. Any one could tell how Phil would be received, and short work was made of the business in hand. Mr. Melvin relinquished the custody of his child, and Mr. Parsons assumed the guardianship. This, with the story of Phil's wanderings, was repeated from one to another, gaining with each additional voice, until the fabulous record would hardly have been recognized if compared with the simple truth. Many had heard of Bill Drock, who was the hero of the hour, and numerous legends were told of the old pine forest, each more won-

drous than the one which preceded. The idlers, of whom there are plenty in every village, strove to catch a glimpse of William Parsons. They had known, at first, that his coming had something to do with Phil Melvin. He was camping out, and the boy was in camp with him.

There was a general rejoicing, but, in the midst of it, Mr. Melvin walked silently to his lonely home. No one congratulated him. He was alone. Ah, then he thought of his wife, who had loved him, despite his neglect and unkindness; of the baby arms which had clasped his neck, and the death angels' visits.

As a flash of lightning, for a moment, dispels the thickest gloom, and reveals the minutest objects, so his past life rose before him. Again he looked into the face of Mary Reed, young, trusting, and affectionate. He had loved her, once, as he was capable of loving; and yet he had made her married life one

prolonged agony. Only Phil remained, and he, away, worse than dead to him.

The old house he had called home, for three years, was fast falling to decay. The smoke-stained plaster had dropped from the walls, and the floors were broken. It afforded a poor shelter, at best, and was now doubly desolate, when no fire burned on the hearth.

Philip Melvin cursed himself, for a fool, as he sat there, while night drew its sable curtains round him. He should have been hungry, for he had fasted the entire day, yet he was conscious of no desire for food. Burning thirst parched his throat and lips, while his eyes seemed protruding from their sockets. Thus he recognized the symptoms of that most terrible of all mental and physical suffering, "delirium tremens."

He threw himself upon the bed, and then for hours endured the very torments of the lower world. How he struggled to avoid the

imps, who mocked him with their frightful shapes and fury breath, he knew by the scene which greeted him in the morning.

He was lying upon the floor, while around him were strewn broken chairs, pieces of crockery, and even tin dishes, twisted into every conceivable form. In his imaginary conflict, he must have clutched at the walls, as the laths were now uncovered. His hands, bruised and bleeding, held long strips which he had torn from the covering of his bed.

His strength was so exhausted that it was with difficulty he rose from the floor; and then the horror of his situation almost overpowered him. If rum had been within his reach, he might have dranked, and relapsed again into unconsciousness; but wanting this, he was forced to think of food.

Some one had remembered him, the previous day, and placed in his cupboard a bowl of coffee, and loaf of bread. Fortunately

these had escaped the general destruction, and furnished what he most needed. Slightly refreshed, the necessity for immediate action stared him in the face. He *could* not, *would* not stay where he was, to be scorned and despised.

He began to set his house in order, or rather, to remove the traces of last night's experience. What fragments could be burned were consigned to the flames; while a large heap of rubbish was conveyed to the enclosure back of the house. This was the garden cultivated, more by his wife and child, than himself, and now offering its first fruits. He could not bear the sight. Each leaf uttered a dumb reproach, and he returned to the house.

One room, which had been closed, and which contained a bed, bureau, rocking chair, and table, part of his wife's wedding outfit, was just as it had been left by the women,

who cared for the dead and dying. Every article in the drawers was clean and smooth; of no great intrinsic value, yet greatly prized by her to whom they had belonged.

Mr. Melvin was in debt, and money could be raised upon these articles, but, for once, he recognized other claims. This furniture, by right, now belonged to his child.

He closed the door, and shut it in, then went up stairs, where, in his weakness and newly awakened emotions, he threw himself upon the low bed, and hugged the pillow Phil had wet with tears. Here, the father's heart was melted, until he could have gone down upon his knees, and begged his boy's forgiveness. He was not wholly given over to the demon, as his tears testified.

In the afternoon, Mr. Wells felt moved to call upon this miserable man, whom others seemed anxious to avoid. "I hope he'll leave town, and never show his head here again,"

said one ; and this expressed the general feeling in regard to him. The man, by whom he had been employed, and who counted him a first rate workman, able to do more and better, in a given time than any other, was glad to be rid of him.

Mr. Melvin found him in a far different mood from what he had expected. "I am glad to see you," was the greeting he gave. "I was just wanting a friend's advice."

"I shall be glad to aid you in any way that I can," replied the clergyman. "I trust you consider me a friend."

"Yes, sir, a better one than I deserve. I don't deserve any, and I've no hard feelings against you, for what you said yesterday. I'm going away, and what there is here, I want to leave for Phil. 'Tain't much, but 'twas his mother's, and he'll prize it. I want somebody to take care of it, and I was thinking about going over to ask you if you would. I know

you've got a great house, and thought, perhaps, you'd find room for it."

"I think we can manage it," answered Mr. Wells, astonished at what he heard. "But where are you going?"

"I don't know, sir, and 'tain't any use making promises; but if I live three months, you'll hear from me. I'm owing some, and likely somebody'll want the things to pay my debts; but if you'll only keep them three months, I'll pay up everything."

"How much do you owe?"

"I don't know, exactly, and that's another thing I want you to help me about. I'll tell you who the men are, and I'll send you the money if you'll let me. Then I'll pay you for your trouble, if I live. If I don't, will you let Phil know that I thought of him?"

"Yes, Mr. Melvin, I will;" and there was a clasping of hands, while the two men wept in silence.

Mr. Wells made a long call ; but this did not prevent him from going again in the evening, when he carried some nicely prepared food, sent by his wife. He had seen Melvin's creditors, and arranged with them to wait three months without making any claims to the furniture, which he promised to remove to his own house the next day.

Mr. Melvin's gratitude for this, and all past favors, was strongly expressed. "I don't want to make many promises," he said, in a faltering voice. "It never was my way ; but I'm going to see what will and strength can do. It may be that Phil will be glad to come back to me yet. If he does, they can't take him away, can they ?"

"No one will wish to take him away," replied Mr. Wells, and this assurance seemed greatly to comfort the father.

"Are you willing I should read from the Bible, and pray with you, before we separate ?" was asked, later.

“There ain’t any Bible in the house,” said Mr. Melvin. “Mary had one, and I’ve been looking for it this afternoon; but I guess Phil took it, when he went away. I wanted it to carry with me, but he had the best right.”

“Then let us pray,” was the response. Prayer ended, Mr. Wells bade his friend good night, and left the house.

After this, Philip Melvin ate part of the food which had been sent him, put the rest in his coat pocket, and taking a short walking stick in one hand, with a bundle in the other, went out beneath the stars, and started for a town forty miles distant. As he passed the graveyard, he paused, for a moment, and then went on without entering.

“Not yet, not yet,” he murmured, brushing away the tears which blinded him.

If his child had seen him thus, there would have been no shrinking away in terror. But the boy was resting sweetly in the stillness of

the woods, having fallen asleep with a happy smile upon his face, as he thought that for him there were no more cruelty and blows.

William Parsons had told him the cause of his absence, and its results.

“And did you see father?” asked Phil, eagerly.

“I did,” was the reply. “I saw him and talked with him.”

“And did he care because I came away?”

“Yes, I think he had been very anxious about you,” answered the young man.

“Was he—” Here Phil hesitated, but after a short pause, he found courage to propose his question in a different form. “Had father been drinking?”

“I think not. I saw nothing in his appearance which indicated it.”

“Then I guess he felt bad,” was the boy's conclusion. “Did he say he wanted to see me?”

“He didn’t say so in so many words, but he thought it very hard that he must give you up.”

“Give me up?” repeated Phil, with a strange, bewildered look. “Ain’t he my father, now?”

“Of course he is; but he has no control over you. I am your guardian now.”

“Do you mean that you are going to take care of me, and I must do what you say?” asked the boy.

“Something like that,” replied Mr. Parsons, smiling. “Shall you like it, like to be my little brother, and try to make a good, useful man?”

How the tears rained over the pale cheeks, as great choking sobs came, one after another, swelling up into Phil’s throat! It was all so strange; and this giving up of the old life, dark as it had been, was somewhat sad. In that life his mother had loved him.

Gradually the violence of his emotions spent itself, and turning to his friend, he said, with a tremulous voice, "I ain't good enough to be your brother; but I love you, and I'll do what you tell me."

"We will see about the goodness," was answered, cheerfully. "I expect you to make one of the best men in the world; and Hugh expects it, too."

"Yes," responded Hugh, laughing. "Here is brother William going to be a minister, while nobody knows what I shall be. Nothing very remarkable, if one may judge from present appearances; so we must look to you for family honors."

Thus an important matter was settled without much apparent forethought; yet William Parsons had not assumed the responsibility of caring for the boy without serious and prayerful consideration. He had counted the cost, and although not quite sure how it

would be done, he intended to make this boy's life useful and happy. Another had laid the foundation upon which, he trusted, with God's help, to rear a noble superstruction.

Hugh had spoken lightly, but when Phil went out his manner changed.

These brothers had been left with a small patrimony, which, with judicious management, had thus far sufficed for their wants. The elder had nearly prepared for his chosen profession, and the younger, after a thorough academic course, had spent one year in college. This, too, was his last, as the most skilful physicians had told him. To give up study seemed to him like giving up all which made life desirable; yet there was no alternative. Ambitious dreams faded, and fond hopes were crushed.

"I only vegetate," he said, one day, to his brother. "Why should I desire to live, when I can accomplish nothing?"

This bitter mood was not often upon him, and when it came was the result of physical weakness and nervous depression, rather than of willful rebellion against a wise providence. Phil Melvin's appearance gave him a new object of interest, and he, quite as much as his brother, wished to benefit the boy. In a few weeks they would leave the forest; William would return to the Seminary, Hugh to his boarding-place, with an old friend of his mother, and Phil must be provided for elsewhere. But where was the question.

"It is not necessary to decide to-night," at length said William. "It was not chance which sent him here, and the future will yet be made plain."

Phil Melvin had confidence in Mr. Parsons, and really loved him for his kindness; but he could talk of some things more freely with Bill, and now there was a subject which troubled him.

“What are you thinking about?” asked the negro, after they had eaten supper, and he observed that his companion was more thoughtful than usual.

“I was thinking how much it would cost to keep me,” was the answer. “Mr. Parsons says he is going to take care of me; but I must earn some money myself. I’ll do just what he says, but I can’t be a beggar.”

“Beggar!” repeated Bill. “Who ever thought of your being a beggar? Mr. Parsons didn’t say so, did he?”

“No, sir; but I know what beggar means. It’s when somebody gives you something, and you don’t give any thing back. I shouldn’t be a beggar to father, because I belong to him; but I don’t belong to Mr. Parsons. I ain’t his boy.”

“I guess you are, now. Didn’t he tell you?”

“Yes, sir; but it don’t seem right. I

wanted to earn some money myself. Would not somebody have me? Mother said I helped her ever so much, and I'd try to do all I could. Can't you find me a place?"

The boy asked this so earnestly that Bill Drock was forced to give attention, and although considering him but little more than a baby, promised to see what could be done.

"And will you tell Mr. Parsons? I'm afraid he'll think I don't want to do what he says; but I do, only I can't be a beggar."

"Yes, I'll tell him all about it," answered Bill, and for the time, satisfied with this, Phil Melvin took his Bible and read until too late for him to see.

"Little boys like me work in factories, sometimes," he said, after laying down his Bible. "I've read about it. Did you ever see a factory?"

"Yes, I've seen one, and don't want to see another," was the reply. "Don't talk about

working in such a close, dirty place. I'd rather camp out the rest of my life, than stay in such a place as that. It's no place for a baby like you."

"I ain't a baby," said Phil, with a slight exhibition of annoyance. "I am ten years old; and I thought I might earn some money in a factory."

"Perhaps you might, but there'll be something better than that for you. Any way, I'll talk to Mr. Parsons about it. He knows best, and you can trust him. So go to sleep, and not think anything more about it."

But Phil could not do this. Thoughts would come, although he closed his eyes and tried hard to follow his friend's advice.

"An independent little fellow," said Hugh, the next morning, when Bill Drock repeated this conversation. "I like him all the better for it; but I guess we can manage to take care of him, without putting him into a factory."

"But let him work some," responded Bill. "He'll be happier, and 'twill do him good every way. Let him think he's doing something for himself."

"He don't look like a boy that can fight his way through," Hugh replied.

"Not *fight* his way, but *make* it, or I'm much mistaken. There's more in him than you think. He's got the real grit. He showed that by starting off alone to seek his fortune. He's good, too; a Christian, if I know what Christian means. Just give him a helping hand; but don't try to carry him. Show him the way to go, and let him use his own feet."

"You are right," answered William Parsons, after some consideration, his own generous impulses yielding to the clearer judgment of his companion. "I will try to put him in a way of helping himself. But he will stay here while we do; and if we had some suitable books, he might study."

“I can get some books when I go to the village, if —”

“And I will play the part of teacher,” added Hugh, without waiting for the completion of Bill’s sentence. Here, I’ve calculated on making some great sacrifices, for the sake of benefitting this boy, and now you take away my chance of winning a crown, for such unselfishness. If I can do nothing more, I can hear him spell abomination, and conjugate the verb, to love.”

“There’ll be enough to do,” answered the “man of all work,” smiling at Hugh’s long speech. “The boy belongs to the company. I found him, and I want to do something for him myself. I’ve been thinking it over. I hain’t anybody but the old woman, and it don’t cost much to keep her. I’m a poor man, but I’ve got a strong pair of hands,” he added, bringing them together with a ringing clap. “If ’twas best, I suppose, God would

have given me some children, to look after ; but he ain't, and this boy has come pretty near my heart. I want you to let me do my share towards taking care of him."

Bill Drock carried this point ; indeed, it would have been nearly impossible to refuse him. His interest in Phil Melvin was as great as that of the brothers, and it was through no fault of head or heart that he could not manifest it in the same way.

Phil was willing to stay in the woods, if he could be employed. "Mother said it was wrong to be idle, and she always worked."

Ah ! mother was his mentor, now, even as she had been during her life ; and often, when he thought himself unobserved, he wept as he remembered her kindness.


She had prayed that God would raise up friends for her child ; and he had done so, not in her way, but his own.

Who shall say, when prayer is offered, how

it shall be answered! He, who sees the end from the beginning, oftentimes withholds, that, giving in larger measure, our cup may in the future overflow, and we, with grateful hearts, may say, "He doeth all things well."

CHAPTER III.

Never too late, while life remains;
Never too late, to wash the stains
From a guilty soul, in the crimson tide,
Which floweth fast from the Saviour's side.
Oh, never too late! Christ died for all:
And none have wandered beyond recall.

RETTY tight work," said one furnace man to another, a sultry summer afternoon. "Jones, sick, because he would get drunk; Mason, gone for a week, and Cilley, off on a spree. The boss won't get through with his contracts, unless somebody comes down from above to help us."

"That's so," was the reply. "I want some

rest myself. I promised my wife I'd go away visiting with her ; but I can't do it, as work is now. Bangs don't know which way to turn ; and he's as bad off on the other side as he is here. The hammers are half of them still."

Charles Bangs, chief owner of the furnace and shovel factory, was at the same time sitting in his counting room, calculating the chances of filling two large contracts made some months before.

At the time when he most needed them, his workmen failed him, and this was the more annoying as it might have been avoided. Sickness, in one instance, had been induced by dissipation ; and now three of those who could render him best service, were " off on a spree." No help for it either. If he discharged them, he could not fill their places, and half a loaf was better than no bread.

Knitting his brows, in a vain effort to solve

the difficulty, he turned his chair so that he could look through an open window, up the long line of dusky road which led to The Furnaces. Presently his eye caught the figure of a man, carrying coat, valise, and walking stick, in a way which showed that he had carried them far. Straight to the counting room came this man, without hesitation, as though sure of a welcome.

“Do you want help, sir?”

The question was asked at once, without any preliminary greeting, and was as quickly answered.

“I do want help.”

“And I want work.”

“Sit down. Sit down,” said Mr. Bangs, pushing a chair towards the new comer.

“This is a hot day for walking.”

“Yes, sir, I suppose it is.”

“You look as though you might know from experience,” was the reply to this somewhat vague remark.

“ Yes, sir, I have taken quite a tramp since last night.”

“ How far have you come ? ”

“ Forty miles.”

“ Forty miles ! ” repeated Mr. Bangs. “ You don’t mean that you have walked forty miles ? ”

“ Yes, sir, every step of it. I came here to get work, and if you’ll give it to me, I shall be glad.”

“ What can you do ? ”

“ Most anything with iron. I was brought up to it from a boy.”

“ Then you are just the man I want, if I can depend upon you.”

“ You can depend upon me to work every day, full hours, and —. But I’ll let my work speak for itself.”

“ I suppose you’ll want to rest a day or two, before you begin,” said Mr. Bangs, looking closely at his companion, as though calculating what might be expected of him.

“No, sir, I’ll be ready for work in the morning,” was the reply. “I need money, and I’ve no time to waste.”

Then followed a short talk in regard to wages and time of payment.

“You’ll want a boarding place?”

“Yes, sir; or a room where I can board myself. I want to get along as cheap as I can.”

“Have you a family?”

The man hesitated, and then said with apparent effort, “No, sir. My wife died a few days ago, and I’ve given my boy into somebody else’s care.”

“Father, can I go swimming with the other boys?”

Philip Melvin started at the sound of the voice which asked the question, so like was it to that of his own boy; but he quickly controlled himself, and listened for the answer, which was given decidedly but kindly.

“No, Freddie, I can't let you go. Mother won't like to trust her boy in the water to-day. You can find some other amusement.”

“Yes, sir,” answered Freddie, pleasantly ; and as he walked away from the window, dewy eyes watched him until out of sight.

Yes, it was Philip Melvin who had walked the entire distance from his old home, and now sat in the counting room of C. Bangs & Co. He was not obliged to walk, or, at least, he was not obliged to do this for want of money ; but he was impelled by a spirit of restlessness, which would not allow him to be inactive. Even now, he was impatient to move ; but Mr. Bangs had not finished with him.

“There's an old house back here on the stream, where you could probably get a room. The woman who lives in it has taken boarders, but she is getting too old for that, and now has only one. She'll be glad to let one

of her rooms. I'll go over and see her about it, and you may as well go with me."

They went out, crossed the stream on a narrow foot bridge, and soon reached the house of which mention had been made. It was a low, irregular cottage, unpainted, and looking as though it might have stood for a century. It had evidently been built, piece by piece, to suit the convenience of its owners, and the rooms were so disconnected that the occupants need not interfere with each other.

Mrs. Steele, the woman now residing here, was somewhat averse to taking a stranger under her roof; yet, to oblige Mr. Bangs, she consented to do so, with the express understanding that he should leave at any time she wished him to do so.

"Certainly I will do that," said Mr. Melvin, who was present while this matter was under consideration. "I don't wonder you are suspicious of a stranger; but I hope you won't have any reason to find fault with me."

“But who is to furnish the room?” asked Mrs. Steele; and the stranger was forced to confess that he had made no provision for this.

“I shan’t want much,” he said. “A chair and a straw bed will answer.”

“But you must have something to eat. How are you going to cook that? Be you a married man?”

“My wife is dead,” was the laconic reply.

“Then, if you’ve had a wife, you ought to know something about housekeeping; but man ain’t worth much to look after things, unless they have a woman to tell them what to do. I’ve noticed that a good many times.”

“And I’ve noticed —,” commenced Mr. Bangs, laughing.

“I know just what you’re going to say,” interrupted Mrs. Steele. “You’ve noticed that women can’t get along alone; and I know that as well as you do. We ain’t any of us

so independent but what we need help ; men nor women either. You've helped me a good many times, and I'm thankful for it."

"I don't want any thanks," was the reply. "At any rate, don't thank me until I have done as many favors for you, as you have done for me and my family. I suppose you can give this man some supper."

"Yes, I suppose I can ; and I'll fix up his room so 'twill be comfortable."

Mrs. Steele went out, and was soon followed by Mr. Bangs, thus giving the new comer an opportunity to look around and think of his own personal needs. He was footsore and hungry ; most of all he was nearly maddened with that thirst which can never be satisfied.

His fingers clutched a piece of silver. This would purchase what would induce forgetfulness, and he longed to forget. Oh, if he could roll back the wheels of time, and

snatching from the past his household treasures, bear them on to a bright future! Oh! could he do this, no labor would seem too severe, no task too difficult.

But never, never! The past comes not back to us. It was a moment of darkness for the wretched man; but a strong will conquered. He raised his head with a determination to claim his place in the world, the place for which God had intended him.

"I shall see you in the morning," said Mr. Bangs, looking in upon him, as he was passing the house.

"Yes, sir; and I may come over this afternoon. I'd like to know where I'm to begin."

"There's a good man to work for," remarked Mrs. Steele, coming in shortly after.

"He treats his help well. You'll like him."

"I expect to, and I hope he will like me," Mr. Melvin replied.

"If he don't 'twill be your own fault. He's

hard pushed just now ; and a good many of his hands are off, when they ought to be at work. But he says you've come a good ways to-day, and I've got something ready for you to eat. I thought it might seem a good while to wait till Puffer comes in. He works in the hammer shop. Come, this way," and Mr. Melvin followed her into a long, narrow room, where a table was neatly spread with substantial food, cold meat, bread and plain cake. Hot tea, too, more grateful to the hungry man than food.

After eating, his hostess showed him the room he was to call his own. It was furnished very plainly, but it satisfied him, and here he was glad to be left alone. Sitting down in an old fashioned arm-chair, he took from his valise a Bible, one he had bought on his way. He opened it and read for a few minutes, then laid it down and went to the furnaces.

"Guess we must have you in the hammer

shop for a while," said Mr. Bangs. "Our hands there are not very steady, and there's a good deal depending just now. I should be glad of half a dozen more good men."

"Then let me go right to work," responded Melvin. "There's an hour or two before time to shut down."

"And you are ready to go to work?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then follow me."

Mr. Melvin had no need to speak in his own praise, as with bared arms he stood by the ponderous hammer, and deftly turned the mass of heated iron held in a vice-like grip. Once there, with his work before him, hope entered his heart. There was something to be done, and he would do it.

Other workmen looked at him, even paused, to watch his rapid movements, but he gave them no heed. When the work shut down, two or three addressed him, asking where he

had been employed, and afterwards indulged in various speculations in regard to him.

“A hard customer, or his face belies him,” said one. “He’ll do to go with some others we’ve got here.”

“You’re right,” replied another. “Probably got turned away from his last place. But he understands his business, and he’s come in good time.”

Meanwhile Philip Melvin walked over to the low cottage and sat down in the old arm-chair, and after some time spent in thought, he read a chapter from his Bible. Mrs. Steele rapped at the door of his room, to know if he would like to take breakfast with her in the morning. Having seen his Bible she was disposed to trust him; and, moreover, there was something in his appearance which appealed to her womanly sympathy.

He had a hard face, she could see that as well as any one; but she saw more than that.

She knew he was unhappy and troubled. "Something's wrong, or such a man as he would think more about eating," she said to herself. "He haint made any provision for to-morrow, and he can't work without he eats." So she ventured to ask him in regard to this, and as a result, he engaged board with her at a reasonable price.

Mr. Bangs had good reason to congratulate himself upon having secured the services of this man. In the whole establishment there was no one more constantly at his post.

When time to receive the first payment of wages, he drew only enough to meet Mrs. Steele's bill, preferring to receive the remainder at the end of another month. Then there was quite a large sum his due, every dollar of which, after settling with his landlady, was sent to Mr. Wells with the accompanying message: "Please pay my debts with this, as far as it will go. I will send more in four weeks."

Up to this time Mr. Wells had not heard from him since they parted. No one knew his destination, and few had sufficient interest to care. His creditors were willing to wait rather than attempt a sale of old furniture; and so long as the minister was responsible for the safe keeping of this, they run no risk.

After Philip had gone, there were some who remembered having heard strange noises from his house the last night he had spent there. But thinking it was only one of his tantrums, and there was no one else to be hurt, they received little consideration. His wife and child were safe beyond his reach, and there was no necessity for being troubled.

Mr. Wells faithfully discharged his trust, making an equitable distribution of the money he had received. Much surprise was manifested, and if the truth were told, he was himself surprised, and looked forward with some anxiety to what the next month might bring.

It brought another remittance ; more than enough to meet Philip Melvin's liabilities, and the furniture was redeemed. Soon after, Mr. Wells, having occasion to go within a few miles of the place where he was employed, improved the opportunity to call upon him.

At his work, paler and thinner than he was wont to be, he did not observe the approach of his friend until his name was called.

"O, Mr. Wells, I am glad to see you," he exclaimed, extending both hands so soon as he could disengage them from their usual employment. "I am glad to see you. I haven't seen a familiar face before since I come here."

"And I am glad to see you," was the reply. "I came out of my way a few miles for that express purpose ; but my visit must be short."

"Then please come over to my boarding place, where we can talk comfortably. I have a great deal I want to ask you. You won't be ashamed to be seen with one like me," he added.

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Wells, with a smile. "I will follow where you lead. This is a pleasant place."

"Yes, sir, it's pleasant for a man that's got a home; and it's a good place for anybody to work. I've nothing to complain of but myself."

"And not much reason for that, now. You must have done well since you came here."

"I've worked," was the brief reply.

"And received your reward. Few men could have earned what you have sent me. I should have written about your business if I had not been coming here. I have some money belonging to you," said the clergyman, after they were seated in Mr. Melvin's room.

"Then please to keep it in pay for your trouble," was the response. "I want to pay my way the rest of my life; and O, Mr. Wells, can you tell me anything about Phil?"

“Yes, I heard from him last week. He is well, and attending school.”

“Where?”

“In the western part of the state, in the same town with Hugh Parsons.”

“Who pays for him?”

“The school is free, and he works in part payment for his board. The rest is paid by the Parsons brothers and Bill Drock.”

“Yes, yes, I remember,” said the father. ’Twas Bill Drock that found Phil. That negro! So he helps take care of my boy; but they won’t any of them do it long. I know Phil don’t belong to me, now,” added the man, in a tone of abject wretchedness. “I’m going to earn money for him, and won’t Mr. Parsons let me pay for taking care of him? O, Mr. Wells, can’t you persuade him to let me? He would if he only knew how hard it is for me to live so. It’s dreadful!” and Philip Melvin, covering his face, wept such

bitter tears as men shed when all hope is denied them.

"I will write to Mr. Parsons," replied his visitor. "Do you wish Phil to know?"

"No, sir; I don't want him to know anything about me. I don't blame him for leaving me. I was a brute; but I must do something for him."

"I presume you can. Mr. Parsons has no wish to keep your boy from you. He is a friend to you, as well as Phil."

"Yes, sir; I know I wasn't fit to have a wife and child; but I haint dranked a drop of liquor since I saw you. Not a drop; and I haint spent a cent when I could help it. I've done most any way so Phil could have his mother's things, and I've been so lonesome. O, Mr. Wells, I'm being punished for my wickedness, and I deserve it."

"My friend," said the clergyman, kindly, "we all deserve to be punished; but there is

comfort in the thought that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. I hope you don't need to be told this."

"I've heard it often," was the reply. "But you don't know how wicked I've been. There don't any body know. Why, I killed my wife; yes, killed her!"

Mr. Wells looked at his companion, to assure himself that his confession was not the wild raving of a madman.

"I know she was sick and died; but my wickedness made her sick," continued Mr. Melvin. "If it hadn't been for rum, I might be a happy man, with wife and children round me. Now see what I am!"

Here he seemed to have exhausted his emotions and was silent. It was not strange that this man, who had spent ten weeks without speaking one word of the past life, which haunted every sleeping and waking hour, should, at sight of a friend, give expression to his excited feelings.

After a little while, Mr. Wells spoke hopefully, pointing him to the future, in which so much might be done to redeem the past, and commending him to the mercy of one, who, having been tempted like as we are, knows how to pity our infirmities.

Philip Melvin listened eagerly, yet shook his head, as he answered, "I've been too wicked, too wicked! But Phil shall have everything he wants, if Mr. Parsons will let me pay for him."

"I can promise for him," answered the clergyman. "I know he will be willing that you shall do what you please."

"And can I send the money to you?"

"Yes, for the present," was the reply. "It can't be that very much is needed."

Here Mrs. Steele announced that tea was ready.

"But I didn't expect to take tea with you," said Mr. Wells, surprised at this. "I only called to see you for a little while."

Mrs. Steele had done her best for the boarder, who never made any trouble, and was always ready to do her a kindness. As they entered the house he told her that his minister had come; and she made haste to prepare supper. "I would have done better if I'd known beforehand," she said by way of apology, although no apology was needed.

Mr. Wells felt amply repaid for the trouble he had taken, and returned home with a reasonable assurance that the time would come when Philip Melvin's son would not be ashamed to acknowledge his father.

The clergyman's first duty was to write to William Parsons of what he had seen and heard, concluding his epistle with some qualifying considerations.

"I must acknowledge that it would be hardly wise to depend too much upon this. Yet I have strong hopes that the man will persevere, and I would be glad to assure him that what-

ever he may see fit to contribute for the support of his son will be cheerfully accepted. Yet Phil is to know nothing in regard to it. This is his father's wish ; and it seems best to regard it."

Mr. Parsons replied that he would gladly appropriate, to the benefit of his ward, whatever might be sent him ; adding,

"No one would more heartily rejoice to have the boy returned to his natural guardian than should I, although I am strongly attached to him, and find, that in seeking to benefit him, I am myself benefitted."

"Assure Mr. Melvin, from me, that his wish, for secrecy, shall be regarded."

Phil only knew that his father had left the old house ; and now surrounded with associations so different from those which cluster about a drunkard, he was, each day, thankful for the new life God had given him. He had lost all feeling of bitterness, and sometimes

thought vaguely that, when he was older, he would seek to reform his father.

His mother's memory was still fondly cherished, and the wild craving he had felt for a love like hers was somewhat answered. His home was in a family, from which a boy of his own age had been taken by death, and whose loss he in a measure supplied. Three little girls, younger than himself, were his companions and playmates, all of whom had welcomed him, as "somebody to fill brother Willie's place."

This place was opened to him in an unexpected manner, and being near Hugh's boarding place, was considered very desirable. Here the boy was happy as he endeavored to make himself useful.

To his questions in regard to what it would cost to keep him, Mr. Parsons had at first given evasive answers, but before leaving for the Seminary his guardian promised to keep

an exact account, so that he might sometime repay whatever of indebtedness there should be.

“Will that satisfy you?” he asked, smiling.

“Yes, sir,” was the reply. “I suppose it would cost a good deal if I should go to college, wouldn’t it?”

“Yes, it costs considerable money to go through college. Do you think you shall wish to go?”

“I want to learn all I can.”

“Then study and do the best you can. Hugh says you are a good scholar now.”

“I try to be. Mother said I must always learn my lessons.”

There was yet another who cared for Phil Melvin. Bill Drock, although a poor man, saved some of his earnings for this boy found in the pine woods. He had insisted upon having enough of his summer wages retained by Mr. Parsons, to buy a good suit of clothes,

which Phil was now wearing. He had been willing to accept them ; but he told the donor that if he lived he should certainly pay for them.

“So you may when you are better able to work than I am,” answered Bill, laughing, as he contrasted his own well-knit frame with that of the child before him. “I’ll put so much at interest, and what more I do for you Mr. Parsons can keep count. I’ll make an investment, and when you’ve got the most money you can pay me all up.”

“Yes, sir, I will,” replied the boy, grasping his friend’s hard hand. “And I shall always love you too. Perhaps I can do you good sometime. You’ve done me so much good ; but I don’t know how to thank you.”

“Don’t try, boy,” said his companion, turning away to hide the tears of which he need not be ashamed. “I don’t want any thanks. You’ve done me the most good, all the time.”

This conversation took place the last evening they spent in the forest, and was one which Phil would be sure to remember. He often thought of it, not carelessly, as did his friend, but with a serious determination to fulfil his part of the contract.

Bill Drock went home from his summer camping, feeling that he had made a good investment of some time, and a little money, yet with his heart strangely yearning for the sight of a familiar face. He told Phil Melvin's story with such graphic earnestness, that "the old woman" shared his interest, and was nearly as anxious to see the boy as was her husband.

Hugh Parsons had promised him a letter, which, in good time, made its appearance, just such a letter as the young man would have been expected to write. It was a somewhat lengthy document, abounding in humorous descriptions, and giving all desired information.

“Remember I have to have an answer to this brilliant production. I can't afford to waste ink and paper on one who gives me no return.”

This was the concluding sentence, following Phil's message, and it received due attention.

Bill Drock, better educated than many of his class, could not only read, and, as my readers already know, express himself in tolerable language, but he could write. True, the writing of a letter was an unusual task; yet, as he said, give him time enough and he was good for it.

The sheet of paper was smoothed so many times, that it lost something of its original whiteness; and the pen was dipped so often, that blots could not fail to be made; but this did not spoil the letter for him to whom it was addressed.

Phil's part consisted of a dollar bill, with a short explanation attached. “To buy just

what you want ;” and the boy put it away carefully, to be used when necessary, and repaid, when he should have the means of so doing.

Phil had now fairly established himself in his new home, and looked forward to winter sports with natural eagerness. First scholar in his class, he was a favorite with teacher and pupils.

Never absent, and never idle, he outstripped his companions ; yet did it in a way which provoked neither jealousy nor envy.

Mr. Parsons had forestalled all inquiries concerning him, by saying that his mother had died, and his father was in no condition to have the care of him at present. Some, there were, who gossipped notwithstanding, but only the family with whom he boarded, knew the whole truth ; and they were wise enough not to disclose it.

Phil never spoke of his father, and seldom

of his mother except at home. Here, when talking with Mrs. Myers, he sometimes indulged himself in repeating her instructions, and affectionate counsels. Then he would wonder if she and Willie Myers were together, and if they could look down and see what was passing in the world.

Before spring, Mr. and Mrs. Myers had become so attached to Phil, that they wished to adopt him, and wrote to Mr. Parsons to that effect, pledging themselves to do for him as they would have done for their own child; giving him the advantage of a liberal education, and in all things consulting his best interests.

William Parsons did not consider himself empowered to act in this matter, certainly not, so long as Mr. Melvin made a regular monthly remittance of more than enough to meet his own expenses. Already a small sum had been placed in the savings bank, as

some provision for the future. So waiving all discussion of the subject, until they should meet, the young guardian assured Mr. Myers that there was no probability his wishes could be gratified.

At the same time Mr. Parsons determined to see the father of his ward; and on a pleasant spring day called at the counting-room of The Furnaces and inquired for Philip Melvin.

"Yes, he works here," was the reply of the gentlemanly agent. "Will you see him at his work, or shall I send for him?"

"I will not trouble you to send for him," said Mr. Parsons. "I have some business with him, although he is a stranger to me."

"Then you will need to be told who he is."

"No sir, I think not. I have seen him once."

"Within a few months?" asked Mr. Bangs, betraying considerable interest.

"I saw him last summer," was the reply.

"You will hardly recognize him if he was a stranger to you then. He has changed very much since. He came to me, and I hired him, without knowing anything of him. I was in great need of help, and he said he could work. I took his word for it, and he proved his word true. He is the best and most reliable workman on the premises. But I am detaining you."

"I am in no haste," answered the visitor, debating with himself whether it would be wise to ask further questions.

This silent debate was soon interrupted by Mr. Bangs, who said, "There is Melvin coming through the yard. You see he don't look much as he did last summer."

William Parsons was prepared for a great change in this man's personal appearance; but the change was greater than could have been easily imagined.

No longer bloated by the excessive use of

stimulants, he seemed to have lost half his size. The purplish color, a drunkard's distinguishing color, had faded from his face, and its expression of brutal will had given place to one of resolute sadness, which said as plainly as silent expression could say, that he was walking straight on in utter hopelessness.

Coming nearer, and closely observed, a well dressed boy sprang to meet him, shouting, "I'm ever so glad to see you, Mr. Melvin! Mother said I might go to see you this evening. You know I only just got home this forenoon."

What was said in return could not be heard; but the man held high his grimy hands, thus preventing the boy from grasping them.

"That is my son," said Mr. Bangs, in explanation of the scene. "Melvin saved his life last winter, and Fred loves him better than any one outside our family. The affec-

tion seems to be mutual, too, and I have no fears when they are together."

"How did Melvin save your boy's life?" asked Mr. Parsons, his eyes still fixed upon him of whom they were speaking.

"Sit down, sir, and I will tell you the story. It is a strange one, but I vouch for its truth. It was last January, in the early part of the thaw, which nearly cleared our streams; and before any one thought, there was danger on the river. There was some water on the ice, but the boys skated, and my boy with the rest. I had gone from home that day, and was detained longer than I expected. When I came back in the evening, the first thing I heard was that Fred had been in the water, and would have been drowned, but for Melvin.

"I was too much excited, and too anxious then to ask questions; but I afterwards learned the particulars. Fred had broken

through the ice, and gone under, where the current set strong towards the dam. One boy older than the rest, told his companions to make for the shore, and then run down stream. But some one was there before them. Melvin was standing by the open water, and when Fred came up just below the ice, he plunged in and brought him out safely.

“There was nobody else within call, and the boys could never have saved him. Fred would have been drawn to the bottom, and we should have lost him. As it was, he was so chilled that he was unconscious for a long time; but he got well over it in a day or two. That is the way Melvin saved my boy's life, and placed me under lasting obligations,” said the father, musingly.

“But how did he know he was needed at the river?” was asked quickly.

“That is the strangest part of it,” answered

Mr. Bangs. "I can tell you what Melvin says himself. He says that while at work, he heard distinctly the voice of his own son, calling, 'Father! Father, save me!' and instantly dropping the iron he held in his hand, he rushed out of the shop and ran for the river at full speed. Why he did this he is unable to tell; only that he felt impelled by some strong power. Had he delayed a moment, he might have been too late. Do you know anything of his history?"

"Something," was the answer to this abrupt question.

"Were you acquainted with his wife?"

"No," replied William Parsons. "She died before I knew the family."

"Melvin told me about her death, and he talked a good deal of his boy, one evening when I was in his room," said Mr. Bangs. "I asked him if he had seen his boy lately, and he shook his head. I didn't need to ask

the question, if I had stopped to think ; for he hasn't been out of town since he came here. He don't go anywhere, unless he can do some good. If any of the men are sick, he is ready to watch with them. He took care of me one night, and I never had better care in my life. It's a pity hard drinking should spoil a man who might be the very best in the world. Melvin says he has been a sottish drunkard, and he looked like it the first time I saw him. He is all right now, though, with a fair prospect of keeping so."

"I am glad to hear you say so," responded the visitor, heartily. "I wished to ask you some questions, but doubted of the propriety."

"It may not have been proper for me to say what I have to a stranger ; yet when Melvin's name is mentioned, I find myself inclined to talk of him," said his employer.

"I am glad you have been so inclined to-day," replied William Parsons. "And now I

will be obliged to you if you will tell me where I can find him."

Mr. Bangs accompanied the stranger, and left him standing by Philip Melvin, watching the huge hammer, which, with each blow, sent the gleaming sparks in every direction like fiery messengers. So fascinated was he by the regularly repeated strokes, and their results, that he was in danger of forgetting the purpose for which he had entered the shop, until Mr. Melvin gave him a glance of recognition.

Then he advanced a few steps, and said, mid the din, "I came here to see you; and if agreeable, would like to talk with you for a while."

"Yes, sir," was the answer. "We will go to my boarding-place;" and although there was an effort to speak calmly, a slight quiver of the voice betrayed emotion.

Nothing more passed between them, ex-

cept some common place remarks upon the weather and season, until they were seated in the house, when Mr. Parsons said, "I am sure you will be glad to hear from your son, and know that he is doing well."

"Yes, sir, I am glad; but I know he'd do well any where. He was always a good boy. Have I sent money enough to pay all his bills?" asked the father, eagerly.

"Yes, more than enough," was the answer. "I have put some in the saving's bank for him. Phil's expenses are not very great. The family where he lives say that he earns his board, and he has needed but few clothes."

"I don't want Phil to work hard, and he ought to dress as well as anybody," exclaimed Mr. Melvin, thinking of Fred Bangs, and pained, at the imagined contrast between the two boys. "I forgot," he added directly, in a different tone. "I've no right to say any-

thing about it. But I love Phil. If it wasn't for helping him, I shouldn't have any heart to work, and it's hard enough now."

"You have a right to say what you wish in regard to Phil," said William Parsons, deeply moved. "I came here to talk with you about him, and learn your wishes. He is happy where he is, and a general favorite. You know why I assumed the care of him, Mr. Melvin. He was thrown in my way."

"I know, I know," responded the unhappy man. "I've lived over that week, his mother died, a thousand times, and I'm glad Phil went away. I don't want him to come back to me either, till — till — he wants to."

What it cost him to say this! The muscles of his mouth twitched nervously, and his hands were clenched.

"Mr. Parsons," he continued, with an effort, "I hated you, when you stood there talking to Squire Todd, last summer. I could

have killed you all. I want you to forgive me for it. Will you?"

"Will I, Mr. Melvin? You have not injured me. I have nothing to forgive."

"But it was wrong the way I felt, and I know it," was the reply.

"Then the wrong lies between you and God. You should ask his forgiveness, not mine."

"I don't dare to ask his forgiveness;" and such a pallor overspread the man's face, as one would shudder to see.

"But God is infinitely merciful," said William Parsons. "He forgives the chief of sinners. Christ died to save you, and he knows all your temptations."

"Yes, yes; but he hates sin."

"Yet loves the sinner. Your Bible tells you that. I see that you have a Bible."

"Yes, I bought it when I was on my way here. I knew my wife used to get a good

deal of comfort out of it, and I thought perhaps I might. Sometimes I seem to, but then I know the promises ain't for me. Mary was good enough to have them all true for her."

"Do you doubt God's word?" remarked the visitor solemnly.

"No, sir, not that. But I'm past all hope. I don't know what God keeps me alive for. I've wished a good many times I could die."

"But, Mr. Melvin, after death comes the judgment. Are you ready to meet it?"

Not a word in answer; one thought of that dread day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, smote him dumb; and his friend hastened to speak again of this pardoning mercy which is extended to all.

Still, not a ray of hope lighted up his face, as he said, "I don't expect anything myself, but I want Phil to go to heaven with his mother. If they are happy I can bear my lot."

“And your lot, I trust, will be to spend a blissful eternity with them,” responded Mr. Parsons. “You may do so, if you will it. Have faith and trust in God. He can overrule all things for your good. You seem to be well situated here,” was added, with the hope of making the conversation more cheerful.

“Yes, this is a good place to work; and I’ve tried to do my best. Mr. Bangs don’t complain of me.”

“I have reason to believe that,” was the reply. “He told me that you had saved his son’s life.”

“Yes, sir, I did; but ’twas no good in me; though I’m glad I saved him. I thought I went after Phil. I heard him call me. I was thinking about him, and I heard his voice above all the hammers. I think I hear him a good many times; but I was sure of it then. Oh, if I could only see my boy, I’d be satisfied to work on.”

“You can see him, if you wish to. You *shall* see him, Mr. Melvin. If Phil knew you sent money to him, he would — ”

“No, no,” interrupted the father. “I don’t want him to know it, and I don’t want him to see me; only I long to see his face once more. You do better by him than I could. I can earn money for him, and that’s enough for me.”

Then William Parsons told the object for which he had come, to submit Mr. Myers’ proposal. “He wishes to adopt Phil as his son.”

“And have Phil call him father!” exclaimed Mr. Melvin.

“Yes,” was the answer. “That is what he wishes.”

“Oh, that would kill me!” cried the father. “I’d give up trying for anything. But perhaps it’s best for the boy,” he added, with a sigh. “Is it?”

“Under the circumstances, I think not,” said Mr. Parsons, decidedly. “But Phil could not have a better home.”

“Then let him stay, and don't tell him you've seen me.”

“It shall be as you wish. I have not seen Phil since I left him, in the autumn; but I shall be at Mr. Myers', next week, and will tell him your decision.”

Mr. Melvin had just received a month's wages, a large part of which he placed in the hands of his visitor, for Phil's benefit, thus adding considerably to the amount already held in trust. The father asked the same question his son had before asked. “Does it cost a great deal to go through college?” and being told the amount, replied quickly, “Then Phil shall go, if he wants to. I can earn that. He's a good scholar.”

“Yes, quite a remarkable scholar, as I am told. He loves his books.”


“Then let him study. He shall have all the money he needs. Fred Bangs says he’s going to college, and he ain’t any smarter than my boy.”

After some further conversation, the two men parted with a hearty shake of the hand, and mutual good wishes; one going forth to labor for the salvation of souls, the other to watch the shapeless iron, transformed by fire and resistless force, into a polished instrument of labor.

Did ever Philip Melvin think that his own heart was being subjected to the same transforming process; that through the discipline of fire and agony, it should yet come forth, meet for the Maker’s service?

CHAPTER IV.

To save the erring, sustain the weak,
Some words of warning, in love, to speak;
This is obeying our Lord's command,
Which bids us labor with heart and hand;
He who obeys, the crown has won,
Has gained the plaudit, "Child, well done."

HIL Melvin was on his way home from school, and, as he passed Mr. Bond's, he looked up to the window at which, in the autumn, Hugh Parsons had been accustomed to sit. There, sure enough, was the familiar face of his friend, a week sooner than he had expected to see it, and for this, all the more welcome. A light tap on the window, and Phil sprang into the house.

"Why, Phil, how you have grown!" exclaimed Hugh, releasing himself from the embrace of the boy, whom he held for a moment at arm's length. "You don't look like my boy of the olden time."

"Don't I, Mister Hugh?" was the response "I want to."

"You do? It's of no use. Let's take an inventory of your possessions, just as you stand, beginning with your head. That, certainly is of generous dimensions, and covered with a profusion of wavy brown hair, only wanting a little of being curled. Hazel eyes. No. But I am sure they were hazel once. Someway, they have grown dark, since I saw you, before. Well, no matter, let that go, and come to the mouth, small and close, thin lips, and white teeth. Why, Phil!" he added, drawing the boy closely to him, "I didn't mean to hurt you. I was only thinking aloud, and you know I love you, my little

brother. You will learn to understand me by and by. Now, tell me how I look."

"Better," answered Phil, swallowing the sobs which had found their way into his throat.

"But you haven't half looked at me," responded Hugh Parsons, smiling. "You don't know whether my hair curls or not; and you can't tell but my eyes have grown darker, during the winter."

"I can tell now," replied the boy, looking him full in the face. "The hollows in your cheeks are filled up, but your hair and eyes are just the same they used to be."

"Yes, I guess they are, Phil."

"Have you come back to stay?"

"I am going to work in the fall, and this summer I shall spend somewhere, perhaps in the woods. How should you like to go there with me?"

"I should like it, if I could earn money there, and I should like to see that good black man."

"I've no doubt he would like to see you," Hugh replied. "But I can't tell what we shall do, until brother William comes. You will have a long vacation, to be filled up some way."

"Yes, sir, and Mr. Myers says I can help him in the store then."

"But I thought you didn't like the store very well."

"No, sir, I don't. But Mr. Myers gave me some clothes, and I want to pay for them."

"Time enough to think about that, when you are older."

"But I want to go to college then, and Mr. Parsons says it takes a good deal of money," said Phil.

"He does? Well I guess he is right about that. But what do you say to taking my money? I have some I intended to spend in college."

"Perhaps I'll borrow some," said the boy, seriously.

“ Well, I shall be ready to loan it, was the reply. “ Now tell me about your studies. I want to know what you have been doing while I was away ; ” and then Phil told, with sparkling eyes, of “ so far in school,” and “ so far out of school.”

“ What time do you have for play ? ” asked his companion.

“ Oh, plenty in the morning and at night. It don't take a great while to learn lessons.”

“ Don't take a great while ! ” repeated the young man, with a laugh. “ Eleven years old, aren't you ? ”

“ Yes, sir ? ”

“ Some people think that is the right age to commence the study of Latin. How should you like that ? ”

Phil had heard some older boys speak of studying Latin, and he was prepared to answer at once, “ I should like it very much.”

“ Are you sure ? Do you think you could

master the grammar, learn the declensions, and rattle off the congregations ? ”

“ I could learn what is printed,” replied Phil Melvin, resolutely.

“ Yes, I guess you could.”

During this conversation, a delicate hand had been threading the boy's hair ; and a pair of sad eyes had looked into the darker ones of the child.

“ Will you let me study Latin, Master Hugh ? ”

“ I will think about it. If I do, I shall hear your lessons myself, and shall expect them to be perfect.”

“ Yes, sir, I can have them perfect. And may I come to see you again to-morrow ? ”

“ Yes, Phil, come every day. Now kiss me, and run home to the little sisters.”

Why was it that Hugh Parsons closed his eyes, wearily, when he was left alone ?

He was thinking of the time when with boy-

ish enthusiasm he had looked forward to a course in college, as the portal through which he should pass to honor and happiness ; when study seemed to him the one object of life. He tried now to believe that earth held for him some other good. If he might not himself climb the mountain, he could point others the way ; and well he knew that a wise and loving father had meted out his destiny.

“ Mr. Hugh has come ! ” exclaimed Phil, as he entered the kitchen where Mrs. Myers was preparing supper.

“ Yes, I suppose he had,” was the reply. “ The stage came by here this afternoon. He came a few days sooner than you expected.”

“ Yes'm,” the boy replied, and caught up the baby, now two years old, which demanded attention.

“ She thinks you are her brother,” said Mary, the oldest of the sisters. “ She told Fanny Dean, you was her brudder.”

"You be my brother," said Susie, giving Phil an extra hug. "Fanny's dot a brudder, and I hab too."

"I wish you was our brother," added Mary. "But you won't ever go away and leave us, will you, Phil? I heard mother tell father that she wanted you to stay just as Willie would, if God hadn't taken him. Didn't you say so; mother?" she asked, seeking confirmation of her words.

"Yes, child, I did; and your father agreed with me. Now if we can persuade Phil to the same mind, we shall be very happy."

"I am sure I should like to stay," answered the boy. "You are all very good to me; but I must do as Mr. Parsons says."

"And he is coming next week," remarked Mrs. Myers.

"Yes'm; and I forgot to tell you that Mr. Hugh talked about my studying Latin. I guess he'll let me, and I shall be so glad. I

can get up an hour earlier every morning, to learn my lesson."

"No need of that, Phil. You can have time for study, and you get up early enough now."

Once before something had been said in regard to Phil's staying with this family, and taking Willie's place; but he had never given it a serious thought. He expected to remain as long as Mr. Parsons thought best, and beyond that he had no definite expectation as to a home. He endeavored to put away all thought of his father. Even now, he seemed to feel the pain of the blows he had received, and sometimes started from his sleep with a vague sense of fear.

He rejoiced in each day added to his age, bringing him nearer to the time when he should cease to be dependent. Every book which told of boys who had risen from obscurity, by their own unaided efforts, was

read with avidity. What others had done he could do. One would have known that to look at him, as he stood gazing out into the darkness the evening after Hugh Parsons had spoken to him of studying Latin. He would make his way steadily, overcoming one by one the obstacles in his path.

The next day he felt that he had taken a long stride, when a Latin grammar was placed in his hand, with permission to learn as much as he pleased for his first lesson.

“But mind you, Phil, I can’t have you a book worm,” said his friend. “Just remember that brains are worth little without bodies to match.”

“Yes, sir ; but I never was sick in my life. Mother used to say I should be as strong a man as father.”

“I hope you may be,” replied Hugh Parsons, mentally adding, “and like him in no other respect.”

What was printed Phil not only *could* but *did* learn, and rarely is a Latin grammar such a source of pleasure as it was to him. But for repeated cautions, he would have studied unreasonably ; and at length his lessons were assigned, with the express command not to study beyond them.

When William Parsons came, he with more wisdom than his brother, allotted the boy's duties. "Too much study," he said, shaking his head gravely. "Phil is too young for such application. Short lessons in Latin, or none at all ;" and this settled the question.

Mr. and Mrs. Myers, who had flattered themselves that they could persuade William Parsons to relinquish all claim to his ward, were greatly disappointed when told that he considered himself only an agent for carrying out the father's plans.

"But I thought Mr. Melvin was not a fit man to have care of his child," said Mr. Myers.

“He has not been,” was the reply. “He does not consider himself so; but he has changed since Phil left home; and although one can never tell what to expect from a drunkard, I am inclined to put confidence in him. Thus far he has more than paid Phil’s expenses. I consider myself accountable to Mr. Melvin, and whenever he sees fit to claim the guardianship of his son, I shall resign my charge at once. At present, I shall leave Phil with you, and consider myself under great obligation for your kindness to him. It seems to me a strange providence which threw him in my way. It was a great self-denial to me, to spend my last summer’s vacation in the pine forest, and nothing but regard for Hugh’s health would have induced me to do it.”

“You didn’t know why you went, after all,” responded Mr. Myers. “If Phil hadn’t fallen into your hands, nobody knows what would

have become of him. I am thankful that he did. He has been a great comfort to us in our affliction, and if we cannot adopt him, we can, at least, love him."

A few days after this, when Phil was talking with his guardian, in a quiet, confidential way, he asked, abruptly, "Do you know where my father is?"

"Yes," replied William Parsons, at the same time giving the name of the town where Mr. Melvin was employed

"Have you seen him since he went there?" was the next question

The young man hesitated; but at length answered, "Yes, I *have* seen him."

"And did he say anything about me?"

"He enquired very particularly for you; and I think he is a better man than he used to be."

"Is he?" asked Phil, eagerly. "He can't take me back, can he?"

“Not unless you wish to go.”

“I don't wish to go,” was the decided response. “I pray for him every day, just as mother told me; but I don't want to live with him. Perhaps when he's old I'll take care of him. I will if he wants me to.”

“You may wish to see him before that,” said Mr. Parsons.

“Do you think I ought to?” enquired the boy, looking earnestly into the face of his friend.

“Not at present. When you are older you may feel differently. You may wish to see him.”

If Phil had only known how his father's heart yearned towards him, he would not thus have spoken. But Mr. Melvin had in part appointed his own punishment, and was expiating his guilt with grim resolve.

He sometimes thought that his life need not be utterly useless, if he could be the means of

saving others from the curse of drunkenness. For this he would gladly have labored, had not distrust of his own abilities prevented.

Among the workmen were several who had nearly wrecked their lives, and beggared their families, through love for strong drink. Commanding good wages, those dependent upon them were meanly clad, and sometimes poorly fed. What are wife and children weighed in the balance against appetite !

Now that Mr. Melvin looked around him, with eyes from which the scales had fallen, he was shocked at the misery and wretchedness he saw ; shocked, too, as he looked back upon his own past life, so brutal and debased.

Once he had been invited to "a jolly time," meaning neither more nor less than a drunken carouse ; only once, for he had refused in a way which offered small encouragement to importunity, and no one cared to provoke him.

His looks and habits were at variance ; yet he made no explanation, and was strikingly reticent in regard to everything connected with himself.

Mrs. Steele said he was a good man ; and she had the best opportunities for judging. Everybody was ready to praise him, after the rescue of Fred Bangs, and as a nurse, he was exceedingly popular. Seldom betraying any emotions, wearing the same impenetrable mask, he was at times the object of much curiosity. Even the man boarding in the same house, knew little of him, but an opportunity for the display of his character was soon to present itself.

Mrs. Steele was persuaded to receive another boarder, a young man, who had entered Mr. Bangs' employ as an apprentice ; a rollicking, good-natured fellow, not afraid of work, or averse to "a spree."

"Nothing bad about him. Only likes a

good time, occasionally," said his guardian, who arranged the conditions of his apprenticeship. "His mother worries a good deal about him : but I tell her there is no need of it. He'll do well enough when he gets older ; marry, and steady down into a good sober man."

"I hope so," Mr. Bangs replied. "But some way not many of these wild fellows *do* steady down, as you call it. Instead of doing better, they grow worse, after they are married. I have seen several such men at work for me."

Mr. Bangs was an honorable business man, just and generous to his workmen ; yet he was not one to give himself unnecessary trouble in regard to their habits or morals. But for young Merrill, the apprentice, he felt a peculiar interest, and it was to oblige him that Mrs. Steele had consented to increase her family.

Mr. Melvin understood the young man at

once, and saw how easily he could be led to ruin. There were a plenty, too, who would do this, and take a wicked pride in dragging him down to their level.

Mrs. Merrill visited her son a few weeks after he came to the Furnaces, and her solicitude for his welfare could be plainly seen.

"He is my only son, and I am very anxious for him," she said to Mrs. Steele. "He has needed a father. I think sometimes I haven't done right with him; but I was afraid of being too strict, and so driving him from home. I don't know as this is the right place for him; though he wanted to come."

George Merrill should have been good, if only for the sake of the mother who loved him; but, alas, for many mothers in our land, whose love is outraged by reckless sons.

The new apprentice was quick to learn, worked well, had lost no time. Mrs. Steele liked him, was always glad to see him coming

towards the house, and in her way, petted him, as she would had he belonged to her. He furnished cheerfulness for the whole family; always coming into the house with a pleasant word or joyous laugh. He spoke of his mother and sisters, affectionately, sometimes indulging in humorous outlines of his plans for the future.

"I am sure you love your mother," said Mrs. Steele to him, when he had been talking of his home.

"Of course I do," was the quick reply. "Who ever heard of a boy who didn't love his mother?"

"I think I have heard of more than one."

"You have!" responded the young man, with astonishment. "A boy who doesn't love his mother, ought not to live. The sun should never shine upon such a monster."

His companion looked at him, a little sadly. She was an old woman and had known much

of sorrow. She, too, had been a mother ; but in her crown of motherhood, there were woven thorns, which had pierced her cruelly.

“Did I say anything wrong?” asked George Merrill. “You look as though I did.”

“No, I didn’t know as you said anything wrong. I was only thinking how a boy would treat a mother that he loved.”

“Treat her well of course. Why, I wouldn’t treat my mother hard for all the world. She has been too good to me for that.”

“Then I suppose you never do anything to trouble her.”

• This was a view of the subject which had not presented itself to the young man’s mind, while speaking so decidedly. He hesitated before replying, and then said, “I don’t suppose I always do just as mother wants to have me. I’ll tell the truth. I know I don’t.”

“And why not?”

“Because — well, — I don’t know exactly. Boys are boys, you know : and they don’t always think just as their mothers do.”

“I know they don’t,” replied Mrs. Steele, with a sigh. “But the mothers are generally in the right. Remember that, George, and don’t do anything to make your mother sorry.”

“I’ll remember,” was the answer. “Your advice is good, and you shall see how I follow it.”

Only a few days after this, George Merrill was invited to join a party of young men, who were going to a neighboring pond, fishing ; and as he was particularly fond of the sport, he decided to accompany them. “I’ll bring you home a nice string of fish,” he said to Mrs. Steele.

“And a sober boy,” she added, with a smile. “If I was your mother, I should rather have you at work than fishing.”

“But I can’t work all the time,” responded the “boy.” “Mother never objects to my fishing.”

Mr. Melvin was tempted to remonstrate, and wished he felt at liberty to do so; but he had not yet won the young man’s confidence, sufficiently to warrant such interference. He could only wait the result, hoping his fears might not be realized.

Ten, eleven, twelve o’clock; and yet George Merrill had not returned. It was a clear moonlight night; such a night as is calculated to awaken the deepest emotions in the heart of every lonely watcher. Philip Melvin watched and waited, until a restless anxiety drove him from the house. He stood for a little while by the stream, then crossed it, and went out into the high road, where, without previous thought of so doing, he walked for a quarter of a mile. Here was a sharp turn in the road, and he was about to retrace his steps, when he

heard suppressed voices beyond. He listened a moment, and then advanced to meet the fishing party so near home.

He recognized them at once. There were six, two lying upon the ground, and four others gathered around a fallen horse.

"What's to be done?" exclaimed one, with an oath. "Here 'tis past midnight, and not one of us can stand straight on our legs."

"Who cares for that?" said another, hiccoughing loudly, and seeming to forget that there was danger of being overheard.

"Who cares for that, if the horse would get up? I want to go home."

Then came another pull at the horse, which resulted in nothing more than the fall of another animal.

"By George, I ain't going to stay here, all night. There's more than one way to get a horse clear;" and the speaker fumbled in his pocket for a knife.

“What you going to do, Bill?”

“Cut that harness,” was the answer.

“No you don’t. Can’t afford it. ’Twon’t pay.”

“Mighty fraid of your money, ain’t you? Then get the critter up.”

By this time, Mr. Melvin having heard enough, came forward, disengaged the horse, and helped him to his feet. “Now young men, you had better get in, and drive home,” he said.

“Guess we had,” was the reply. “Never see a horse act like that before.”

“Perhaps the trouble is with you,” suggested the new comer.

“Can’t say but ’tis. Any way, my head feels queer.”

With some difficulty, three of these young men managed to seat themselves in the buggy, after the horse was safely harnessed; when Mr. Melvin turned his attentions to those be-

hind. Another horse had acted strangely, having stood still during the whole affair. One of the young men, who had found a resting place upon the ground, was roused by his companion, and after shaking himself, seemed tolerably sober. The other was not so easily wakened.

“Merrill's dead as a log. What's going to be done with him?”

This, like all other exclamations of the party, was rendered more emphatic by the addition of oaths, which would shock any right-minded person, and which I have no wish to transcribe.

“Leave Merrill to me,” said Mr. Melvin.

“I will see to him. Drive on, and mind you don't upset yourselves.”

They were glad to do this, for two reasons. They really wished to reach home; and had no fancy for being longer subjected to the scrutiny of this stern, silent man. It was an

unfortunate conclusion to the high old time they had enjoyed so much ; a mortifying circumstance.

But George Merrill was unconscious of all this. There he lay, in a drunken sleep. It might have been wise had Mr. Melvin allowed him to be carried home ; yet this had not seemed desirable. The young man needed a severe lesson, and his companion was the one to enforce it. He must be made aware of the danger which threatened him. It was well that his mother did not see him ; well that his sisters did not know his disgrace.

Philip Melvin bared his head, as he stood there, in the moonlight, and reverently asked God that he might be allowed to save this son and brother. "Grant me this," was the wild cry of his heart ; and although it was no Christian's prayer, it was neither mockery nor abomination in the sight of Him, to whom it was addressed. If it had been his own son

who lay before him, the father would have accepted it, as a just punishment; now it was a bitter grief.

He knelt beside the young man, brushed back his hair from his forehead, and then raised him to a sitting posture, calling his name repeatedly.

"Where am I?" was at length asked in a sleepy tone.

"Out of doors," was the reply. "It is one o'clock at night, and you are drunk."

"What did you say?" enquired George Merrill, rubbing his eyes, and making a weak effort to move.

"I said you were drunk;" and this time the words were fairly hissed in his ear.

"You don't say. Never was drunk in my life. But seems to me this is a mighty hard bed. Where am I?" he again asked

The rippling of water suggested a new mode of treatment, and making use of his hat, Mr.

Melvin brought enough of the cool liquid to bathe the face of his friend, without any objections being made to the manner of its conveyance. It produced the desired effect; and George Merrill struggled to his feet.

"Why, Mr. Melvin, is it you?" he exclaimed, at the same time resting heavily upon the strong arm, offered for his support.

"It is me," was the reply. "Are you glad to see me?"

"Yes, I'm always glad to see you," answered the young man, with some hesitation. "But I don't quite understand this business. I thought I went fishing."

"I guess you did, and you are so far on your way home. Can you walk?"

"Yes, why not? I'm a good walker."

"When you are sober," added Mr. Melvin.

"Yes, when I'm sober. Some way my head feels queer. Don't know but I'd better sit down and rest a while. I'm wet, too, and my

boots feel heavy. Wonder if I got into the water, I don't remember anything about it."

"No matter," said his companion. "It's quite a walk home, and time you were there. So, hold on to me, and we'll go along."

"Yes, here goes. I can walk just as fast and just as well, as anybody. But I've got the hiccoughs. I don't see what that means. I thought I was riding, too. Where are the rest of the boys?"

"Gone home," was the laconic reply.

But little progress was made while this conversation was being carried on, although it occupied several minutes. George Merrill's words followed each other in slow succession; his tongue tripping as bad as his feet. The clock struck two, just as he reached his boarding place, and was assisted up the stairs.

Three hours later, he was sleeping soundly, although it was time that he should be wide awake.

“Wake up, George!” shouted a fellow boarder, passing the door of his room. “You were out late last night. Better hurry up, or we shall think you were off on a spree.”

This roused the sleeper, who sprang up without delay. Instantly he pressed both hands to his head, in the vain effort to still its throbbings. His stomach was in a state of rebellion, his limbs were stiff, and altogether he felt very unlike Mr. Bangs' new apprentice, who was always ready for work when morning demanded. He was paying dear for last night's pleasure, which, after all, had not been so great at its best. He had but a confused idea of what had happened, until he plunged his face and head into a basin of cold water, thus clearing away the cobwebs which obscured his mental vision.

Then he remembered, blushing as he remembered. But there was no help for it. He must go to his work. For breakfast he

had no appetite ; and although he managed to swallow two cups of coffee, it was with great effort. Mrs. Steele asked no questions, Mr. Melvin was more silent than usual, while the other members of the quartette attempted sorry jokes.

That morning young Merrill saw some of his last night's companions, looking much as he felt.

" I suppose Melvin got you home all right," said one.

" Yes, but he never'll do it again."

" I hope not. The fact is, we got rather more aboard than we could carry : and we've got to pay for it, too."

" What do you mean ?"

" Mean what I say. But you've nothing to do about it. You were with the other team ; but our horse got a confounded gash in one knee, and it must be paid for. Well it can't be helped, and there's no use crying for spilt milk."

“If there hadn't been anything but milk to spill, we shouldn't got into such a scrape,” replied George Merrill, his face betraying the annoyance he felt.

“Guess you are right there. The fact is, we were a little top heavy, by the time we started for home.”

Work was a burden that day, and thought a torture. The hours dragged heavily, and night found the young apprentice moody and taciturn.

“Come up to the corner to-night,” said one of the workmen, as he left the furnace.

“No, sir!” was the decided reply. “I've something else to do.”

“Then you are busy,” said Mr. Melvin, who was standing near. I was going to ask you to spend the evening with me.”

“There is nothing to prevent my coming if you ask me,” responded George Merrill. “I only meant that I had something else to do, besides going to the corner.”

“Then come to my room after supper.”

Supper was mere ceremony to the young man, who was more tired than he remembered of being before. Yet it would have been impossible for him to sleep, had he laid his head upon a pillow. He shrank from meeting Mr. Melvin alone; but he supposed the interview must come, sooner or later, and it would be a relief, when it was over.

Philip Melvin was reading in the Bible, when his young friend entered. “Sit down,” he said. “I was thinking of you, and wondering if you would come.”

“Of course I would come;” was the reply, as a sickly smile overspread the face of the speaker. “I only sat down in my room a few minutes, before coming for the lecture.”

“Then you expect a lecture.”

“To be sure;” and the young man was relieved, that thus the dreaded subject had been broached. “I deserve a lecture, and something more than that.”

“Then, you won’t receive what you deserve, here. I’m not going to give you a lecture: but I should like to tell you a story if you are willing to hear it.”

“A story!” repeated George Merrill, breathing more freely. “I shall always like to hear stories, if they are interesting.”

“When you have heard this, you can judge about the interest. At any rate it is true, and — do you want to hear it?”

“Yes, Mr. Melvin.”

“Well, I’m glad you do; for I want to tell you I ain’t much of a story teller, but I’ll do my best. Twenty-four years ago there was a boy sixteen years old, bound apprentice to a blacksmith, in a town more than a hundred miles from here. The blacksmith thought himself lucky. The boy was strong, and willing to work; and besides, he was an orphan; so there was nobody to interfere, let come what would.

“What was the boy's name?” asked George Merrill, his interest fairly roused.

“Wait for that,” was the answer. “It don't make any difference about his name. The story will be just the same. The boy was careful to do his work well; but when it was done he calculated to have a good time, and as the blacksmith didn't care, there was plenty to help him. You know what young men call a good time. They smoke and drink and swear, and think they are smart. At least, that's what they did when I was young; and I see a good deal of it now-adays.”

This was a severe hit; but Mr Melvin did not look at his companion to see the effect.

“I won't make my story longer than necessary. Look round among young men, and you'll see a good many very much like the blacksmith's apprentice, making fools of themselves, and trouble for others. Before he was twenty-one, he could smoke as long, chew as much

tobacco, and drink as much liquor, as any man in the village ; and was proud of it, too. Perhaps if he'd had a mother, he would have done different. But he was alone. Nobody seemed to care anything about him except the blacksmith, and all he cared, was to get as much work done as he could."

"Hadn't he any brothers and sisters?" asked the young man, who listened to this story.

"He had one sister. But she was given away, when their mother died, and they didn't know anything about each other. I don't think this boy ever stopped to look ahead : if he had it seems as though he'd made some provision for living. But plenty of men do as he did, sowing wild oats, they call it ; and sometime they must reap the harvest."

George Merrill was too much moved to speak, although his companion evidently expected that he would, and waited to give him opportunity.

“After a while the young man got tired of a blacksmith’s shop, and thought he’d go to work in a furnace, where he could get better pay, and have more time to himself. In the place where he went, an old minister talked to him and tried to make him see how foolish and wicked it was for him to do as he had. It seemed as though this had some effect. Any way, the young man gave up drinking, and spent his evenings reading and studying. He had been called a good scholar when he was a boy : and he began to take some pride in having it said that he knew more than the men he worked with. There wasn’t anything but what he could do with iron, and the way was all open for him to be a rich man, if he’d kept on. But you see, he had a terrible appetite for liquor. Whenever he went where it was, it almost drove him crazy, and he never was sure of getting through a day, without drinking. He didn’t want to drink ; but it seemed, sometimes, as though he couldn’t help it.”

By this time, great beaded drops were standing on the speaker's forehead, and his voice was husky with emotion ; but he continued :

“The young man kept sober a whole year, until he had some confidence in himself. Others had confidence in him, too. He thought he was particular where he went, and — well — it's no use telling the whole ; but in a year more, he was as miserable a drunkard as could be found. Then he went to another place, where there didn't anybody know him, and tried again. But now 'twas harder than ever ; up hill work every day ; though he managed to keep up a respectable show for a while ; and he had another chance to do well.

Phil Melvin was silent so long after saying this, that his companion was about to ask for the completion of the story, when he resumed.

“ Now comes the saddest part. This young man saw a young woman he wanted for his wife, and he deceived her by pretending to be better than he really was, until she married him.”

“ Did he love her ? ” asked George Merrill, quickly, thus revealing the fact that here for him, lay the great interest of the narrative.

“ Yes,” was the reply. “ He loved her as well as such a man is capable of loving. But such men don't know anything of true love. They may think they do ; but it is not possible for them. A drunkard is the most degraded man under heaven. He will do anything to gratify the hellish appetite which consumes him, and this man, I am telling you of, was as bad as the worst. His wife was a good woman, but he dragged her down to poverty and wretchedness. They moved from place to place, till at last she died. Her husband killed her.”

“Killed her!” exclaimed George Merrill.

“Yes, killed her,” was the reply. “I don’t mean that he cut her throat; but he killed her with unkindness and neglect. I’ve seen a good many women killed that way. Husbands kill their wives and sons kill their mothers. God holds them responsible for it, too.”

“And what became of this man. Hadn’t he any children?”

“I’ll tell you pretty soon what became of him. He had four children; but they all died except the oldest, a son, and he run away. So the man was left alone?”

“What made his son leave him?”

“Because the man whipped him, and knocked him about, till he had no comfort in living.”

“Served the man right. Any body that will treat a boy like that, deserves to be left alone. I would not stay with such a father. Such a man isn’t fit to live, any way.”

Philip Melvin's face was of an ashen hue, as his strong features worked convulsively, and he essayed in vain to speak.

"What is the matter?" cried his companion. "Are you sick?"

"No, not sick," was the answer, in a voice which could not have been recognized; so unlike was it to the usually clear, full tones of the speaker. "Then you think such a man, as I've been describing, isn't fit to live."

"That was my first thought," replied George Merrill, with some hesitation. "But perhaps I'm not a good judge. I don't know all the circumstances."

"No, you don't. I haven't told you the worst. I couldn't."

"What became of the man?" again asked George Merrill, coming back to this point.

"What became of him!" repeated the narrator of this story, in an absent way. "Do you know who helped you home last night?"

“ Yes, you did, Mr. Melvin ; and I’ve wanted to thank you for it. But I didn’t know how to begin. I’m ashamed of myself ; and I must seem to you something like the young man you’ve told me about.”

“ Well, George, the man I’ve been telling you about helped you home last night. I’ve been telling you my own story ;” and the speaker covered his face with his hands.

“ Then let me take back what I said, just now. Everybody says you’re a good man, and I’m sure you’ve done me good. I know why you told me a story, instead of giving me a lecture ; and you may be sure I’ll remember it.”

“ Will you, and will you learn a lesson from it ? I don’t want people here to know about me, and I wouldn’t have told you, if I hadn’t thought, perhaps ’twould do you good.”

“ They shan’t know from me,” said young Merrill. “ I can keep your secret, and I will.”

“And you won’t do again as you did last night. I couldn’t sleep, for thinking of you, and I sat here, waiting till something drove me out of the house. I’m glad I went, though I kept saying to myself, all the time, ‘That boy don’t belong to you.’ But I knew you’d got a mother who thought about you. I’ve got a boy, too, and I want him to be a good man. Why, George, I’d rather see him in his coffin than see him as I saw you, last night. Perhaps your mother would feel so.”

“I know she would,” replied the young man, now melted to tears. “My mother is a good woman, and prays for me every day of her life.”

“I hadn’t any mother to pray for me,” said Mr. Melvin, sadly. “She died when I was very young. My father lived till I was fourteen years old ; but he was not a praying man. Think of your good mother, the next time you are invited to join such a party as you did last night.”

"I will, Mr. Melvin. Let me give you my hand on it. I wish I had staid at home. But perhaps I needed to go through just as much, and it better come now than when I'm older."

"Yes, the sooner the better ; if it does you good."

"It *shall* do me good. You shall see that it does."

Here a letter was thrown through the open window, and George Merrill rose to leave the room.

"You needn't go. This letter will give me news of my boy," said Mr. Melvin, looking at the superscription.

"Then he writes to you," was the involuntary response.

"Never !" said the father. "In one sense he doesn't belong to me. He has a good man for a guardian, and I pay his expenses. Working for him is all the comfort I have. I wasn't fit to have the care of him. See to

what love for strong drink has brought me, and take warning."

He read the letter. Phil was well, studying Latin, and fully realizing all expectations in regard to him. "He is a noble boy," wrote his guardian. "There are not many like him. My only trouble is, that he applies himself too closely to his books."


"I shall go from here in a few days, and my brother shall remain but a short time longer. But I shall leave our boy here, for the present, unless you have some other plans."

William Parsons had written thus kindly, and wisely, rejoicing the father's heart, appealing to his best feelings, and increasing his self respect. He could have a voice in his son's future; so that life was not wholly without value; and now if he might but save another from ruin, he would count it a blessing, for which to thank God on bended knees.

CHAPTER V.

Years of trial are over, at last,
Gone with others, which lie in the past ;
Grief forgotten, and sorrow no more,
Love has conquered, and joy in store.

“ O father, my father ! ” The heart bounds to hear ;
This name falls, like music, again on the ear.

ELL, old woman, guess you'll have
to look out for things here at home,
two or three weeks," said Bill
Drock to his wife ; “ I've got a letter
from Mister Hugh, and he's a notion of trying
the camp again. He and the boy Phil.”

“ There's enough for us both to do here,”
answered the wife. “ You said, too, you wan't
going to camp this summer.”

“ Yes, I know it, but this letter alters the

case. I want to see Mister Hugh ; and I've got a little invested in that boy. I want to see how it's likely to turn out. Guess I could spare a few dollars more, couldn't I ? ”

“ Yes, old man ; we could, if it's necessary. We've got enough for ourselves, here.”

Bill was to meet the young man and his companion, on the stage road, at the nearest point to camp. “ Make ample provision for the eating ; ” wrote Hugh Parsons. “ I shall be ravenous.”

Punctual at the time appointed, Bill Drock was waiting in the edge of the forest, looking out occasionally from his shady retreat, that he might catch a sight of the stage, as it came up the road.

“ Hurrah ! ” he shouted at last, swinging his hat, in a way which would have frightened less well trained horses, than those of our old friend, the driver.

“ Halloo, Bill ! ” was the response, “ you turn up once in a while.”

“Yes, sir; and I always turn up in the right place, too. You notice that.”

“I do notice it; and I heard the college folks were going to put some kind of a handle to your name. Heard anything about it yourself?”

All this was lost upon the negro, who had eyes and ears only for two passengers, who were clambering down from the loftiest seat this vehicle afforded.

No sooner had the elder reached terra firma, than he exclaimed, with a glad smile, “How are you, old fellow?”

“I’m hearty, Mr. Hugh,” was the reply.

A valise for each traveller, with a heavy shawl, rolled into the smallest possible compass, and tightly strapped, was their only baggage, so that the stage was not long delayed. Phil Melvin had chosen to be silent; but now that he was left alone with his friends, he made an effort to speak. He was very glad

to see the man who had found him in the same pine woods a year before ; but it was impossible for him to say so, and Bill came to his assistance by exclaiming, in a laughing tone, " So this is our boy. I'm glad to see you again ; but you've grown so tall, I should hardly know you. Perhaps I ought to call you Mister. How should you like that ? "

" I shouldn't like it at all. But I'm just as glad to see you as I can be, only it seems so strange to be here again. I couldn't say so at first ; " and he took Bill Drock's hard hand between his own, and looked up into the black face with beaming eyes.

Hugh Parsons, who had walked on a few steps, smiled as he heard this frank avowal of pleasure, although his thoughts were somewhat saddened by memory. The last year had been an eventful one to him, as well as to his companion.

" I'll take your things, " said Bill, coming

up, looking radiantly happy, as he carried Phil Melvin's valise and shawl. "I haint anything else to do ; and I'm the strongest."

"Quite sure of that?" asked the young man, relinquishing his baggage. "I call myself pretty strong."

"You look better for living than you did last year," was the response. "But there's a chance for improvement. I've got things all ready for you. Been here two days, and toted enough for a whole gang."

Bill Drock supplemented this with a laugh which made the old forest ring. "I've been so happy, I wanted to laugh like that, ever since I came here ; but I couldn't, because there wasn't anybody to hear. Now I'm going to laugh as much more as I want to, and Phil must help me."

"We shall both help you," said Hugh Parsons. "I am going to do something this summer, besides lie like a log, on pine boughs. I intend to fish and tramp generally."

“So you shall, if you obey orders, and don't make yourself sick. I wish Mr. Parsons had come. Where is he?”

“Gone to preach the gospel to the heathen, in the western part of New York.”

“He will make a good minister,” responded Bill Drock. “He's a good man.”

Phil Melvin was walking slowly, but keeping within sight of those before him, that he might not lose his way. Weary, foot-sore, and hungry, he had trodden the depths of this forest, longing for rest and safety. Now he was provided with all necessary comforts, and secure in the love and care of generous friends. How grateful he was for the marvelous change in his life; and what noble resolves he formed there beneath the old pines, which had witnessed his poverty and suffering. His mother seemed nearer to him here. And his father — yes, he, too, seemed nearer, although still far off. The boy never thought

of him, except one to whom he might, some time, render assistance.

"You'll lose your way again, Phil," shouted Hugh Parsons, thus breaking the train of thought, and quickening the laggard's steps.

The camp was clean and fresh as it could be made, and despite the young man's assertion that he should do something besides lie on pine boughs, he was glad to test the comfort of such a couch. Phil went to the kitchen, and watched his sable friend prepare supper, talking, as he, too, rested.

"You're going to be a great scholar, ain't you?" said Bill Drock.

"I mean to be," was the reply. "If I can earn money enough, I'm going to college. But I don't know as I can. It takes lots of money."

"How much?"

"I can't tell exactly. A good many hundred dollars."

“And you want to go. What you going to make? A minister, like Mr. Parsons?”

“I shan’t be good enough for that,” answered the boy. “And I’m afraid I can’t earn money enough. I wanted to work for Mr. Myers this vacation, but Mr. Hugh said I must come with him.”

After this, Bill asked a great many questions, and his companion told him all he wished to know.

“You’ve got a good home.”

“Oh, yes; Mrs. Myers seems almost like my mother. I thought there was somebody in the world like her. The children cried when I came away, till I promised to come back.”

“How long you going to stay there?”

“I don’t know. Just as long as Mr. Parsons says. I must do as he tells me. He wrote to me about coming here, and said I must leave all my books at home, except the

Bible. So you'll let me go fishing, won't you?"

"Yes, and I don't know but I shall take you over to see the old woman. That's my wife," added Bill, laughing at the look of wonder on the boy's face. "She wants to see you, and Mr. Hugh, too. I'm going to talk to him about it."

By this time supper was ready, and Phil was called to eat with Mister Hugh, a summons which he obeyed, although he would have preferred to eat in the shanty, as he had done the year before. Such a supper. Trout fried to the most appetizing shade of brown, roasted potatoes, hoe-cake, which would compare favorably with the best made south of Mason and Dixon's line, and coffee rich with well beaten eggs. No wonder the table was cleared, and, like Oliver Twist, Hugh begged for more.

"Got a reserve," said Bill, as he went

back to the kitchen from which he had been called. "I knew you'd be hungry," and the reserve was brought. "There, now, that's all I've got cooked, except some potatoes and salt."

"And what will *you* do for supper?" asked Phil Melvin, with some anxiety.

"Cook some more," was the reply. "Trust this child to look out for number one. Got enough now?"

"Yes," answered Hugh. "If we haven't, we'll wait for enough till to-morrow."

Bill Drock was delighted with the unequivocal compliments to his cooking, and set about preparing his own supper in a most genial mood. He could tote enough for them all, without minding the heat or distance. More than satisfied with the result of his last year's investment for Phil, he calculated carefully what more he could do, thinking of this until he fell asleep.

Hugh Parsons was early awake the next morning, ready for the bath which had been prepared, and which he declared to be magical in its effects. His man of all work chose to consider him something of an invalid, to which he made no objection, so long as it did not interfere with his own plans.

“Now, what is to be done to-day?” he asked, after breakfast. “I can’t lie round here.”

“Then you can go fishing, if you want to.”

“I *do* want to; I must have all the exercise I can get. In a few weeks, I shall go to my brother, and before winter, I shall be at work.”

“If you wouldn’t think me too bold, I would like to ask what you are going to do.”

“I don’t know yet. What should you think of my running a farm?”

“You run a farm?” exclaimed Bill Drock,

with one of his characteristic laughs. "Guess you wouldn't like it very well."

"I am afraid I shall not," was the serious answer. "But the doctors say I must live out of doors, and in order to do that, I must farm or peddle. Peddling wouldn't suit me," he added, merrily. "William is on the look-out for some land. I'm going to have a good farm, or none."

"Never did a day's work on a farm in your life, did you?"

"No, but I'm sure I could, if I should try. Perhaps I'll send for you. Will you come?"

"I don't know, Mister Hugh. I'd go as far for you as most anybody; but that's a good ways off, and I'm afraid the old woman wouldn't like it. What you going to do with the boy?"

"Leave him where he is, for the present. When he is older, he will need to go where he can attend a more advanced school."

"He wants to go to college."

“Yes, and he’s going, if he lives, and has good health.”

“He says it will cost a good deal of money.”

“Yes, but there’s money enough for him.”

“I want to do a little for him,” said Bill Drock. “You see that boy seems nearer to me than anybody but my old woman; and she wants to have me help him.”

“Bill Drock, you are a noble man,” exclaimed Hugh Parsons, grasping his companion’s hand. “I am proud to have you for a friend. If Phil ever needs your help, be sure you shall have the privilege of giving it.”

This man was never so happy in his life before, although he wiped the tears from his eyes as he said, “Thank you, Mister Hugh. I know I’m only a poor, ignorant man, but I should like to do some good in the world. It is not much one like me can do.”

"You are not sure of that," was the response. "You may never know in this life what good you do. We work, each in his own place, and God meets out our reward."

"Yes, that's a comfort, Mr. Hugh. I've thought of that a good many times, when I've seen folks doing what I couldn't; and I should be glad to help Phil do what he wants to."

"You shall, if it is ever necessary," answered, Hugh Parsons, and Phil coming up, the conversation closed.

Fishing was the order of the day, involving a two miles tramp, and proving a good investment of time and strength. Night found the trio ready for rest and sleep.

Three weeks had been allotted to this recreation in the forest, but it was prolonged to four, during which time, a visit was made to Bill Drock's home, ten miles distant. Had the visitors been princes royal, no



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greater preparations could have been made for them, than was made by "the old woman," and her husband.

Both officiated in the kitchen, and there was a rapid decrease in the number of chickens on the place. Cream and eggs were of no account, except as they could furnish food for the honored guests. All, too, was served with such neatness as to enhance the luxury of living.

At the end of two days, Hugh declared it would never do to remain longer. "We shall be spoiled," he said, laughing, while the mistress of the house shook her head at what she called nonsense.

She was glad to have seen Phil, of whom she had heard so much, and bade him good bye with the feeling that she had known him for a long time.

After this, there were a few days in camp, and then the stage driver found two passen-

gers awaiting him at the edge of the pine woods. Bill Drock was there to see them off, in less jubilant spirits than he had been at their coming, yet able to respond heartily to all words of greeting. Both Hugh Parsons and Phil had promised him letters, and this promise did much towards consoling him for their absence.

"Been camping out, have you?" said the driver, so soon as they were well on their way.

"Yes," was the curt reply, in an indifferent tone, but nothing daunted this man, who had exhausted his powers of enquiry on Hugh Parsons a month before, continued, "Guess I brought you up, a while ago."

"Yes," was again said.

"This boy's pretty young to try camping. He looks like a little fellow we used to have in our town. I thought of it when I saw him before. Wonder if you're any relation to

him," he added, turning to the boy, and looking him in the face.

Phil Melvin knew the driver perfectly well, having often seen him, and thought him a great man to be able to manage horses in such a wonderful way. Phil, however, did not wish to acknowledge himself, and now looked at his companion for some way of escape.

"He has no relative in this vicinity," said Hugh Parsons. "We came from another part of the State."

Completely foiled, the curious man began to whistle loudly, giving an occasional look at his young passenger, in the vain effort to satisfy himself if his suspicions were correct. It was not strange that he failed to recognize the elder, although he prided himself upon remembering every face he had once seen.

Phil was glad to be at home with his books and the children, who gave him such a cordial welcome. He only regretted to lose his friend,

who, before leaving, made arrangements for him to continue the study of Latin, and gave him much good advice.

“Don’t talk of earning money at present,” said Hugh Parsons, at their last interview. “I tell you there will be a way to repay every cent you have received; and I would not tell you this, if I was not sure of it.”

“Are you quite sure?” asked Phil.

“Quite sure,” was the reply. “All you need do, for the present, is to keep yourself well, learn what you can, and get ready to be a useful man. Will you do that?”

“Yes, sir, I will try to do just right.”

“I have no doubt you will,” responded the young man. “You have been a comfort to us, ever since we first saw you; and I’m sure there’s good in store for you. Perhaps I shall send for you to come out to my farm, when I get settled. There’s a good school where brother William is. You might fit for college there.”

For the next year and a half, there was little of incident in this boy's life. He went and came, like a child of the family, giving no cause for censure or anxiety. Mrs. Myers he addressed as mother; but he never forgot that he had a father, and could not bring himself to speak that name.

He was thirteen years of age when his guardian visited him for the purpose of deciding definitely in regard to his future course. Mr. Melvin had, from time to time, remitted so generously for his son's support, that there was quite a sum at interest, to be drawn upon when necessity should demand. William Parsons was particularly desirous that the father and son should meet, yet was unable to decide how this should be effected.

Before seeing Phil, he visited Mr. Melvin, and found that a surprising change had been wrought in the man. He was universally respected, exerting a powerful influence over all with whom he associated.

“Melvin is the best man on the premises,” said Mr. Bangs, when speaking of him. “Best everyway. He has been a treasure to me; helped me through some tight places, where I was ready to give up.”

One who looked at Philip Melvin would not suspect this of being flattery. He was a man of splendid physique, with a strong, intelligent face. What might he not have been, but for the worse than wasted years, which lay behind him? Regret and remorse! How they haunted him, like spectres! So true is it, that the past, with its ten thousand arms, enfolds us.

Mr. Parsons spent a day and a night with him, talking much of the boy, in whom they had a mutual interest.

“I wish you to decide in regard to him,” said the young man. “He is one to be proud of, and as yet, he knows nothing of what you have done for him. He ought to know, as a matter of justice to you both.”

“I think of him a great deal,” was the father’s reply. “I long to see him, but I can imagine how he feels; how I should have felt at his age. I know, too,” he added, “my father used to whip me, and I hated him for it. It may have been wrong; but it was natural, and my father didn’t treat me half so bad as I did Phil. I don’t wonder the boy don’t love me. But I love him better every day I live. My love for him has been the salvation of me. I’d cut off my right hand, before I’d do anything to disgrace him. Perhaps we shall meet when he’s a man, and understands better what ’tis to be a drunkard. He can’t know now. I want you to take care of him, and I want to pay you for all the trouble. I can do it, as far as money goes, and it will be a great satisfaction to me.”

Mr. Melvin seemed never ready to stop, when once he commenced speaking of Phil. There was such a world of tenderness in his

heart, which had found expression only in manual labor for the support of his child, that words were an unbounded relief. "I shall tire you," he said, at length.

"No fear of that," said his companion. "I am thankful Phil has so good a father, and I am sure he will repay you for all you do for him."

"Repay me," repeated the father, "It will be enough, if he forgives me. Oh, I want Phil to be good. I want him to be a Christian, so he can meet his mother in heaven."

"And his father, too," added the young minister.

"I don't dare to expect that. It would be too much, after my wicked life; and he didn't want to live with me here."

"If you had been as you are now, he would never have left you."

"I know, I know," said Mr. Melvin. "If I had been as I am now, I should have made

my wife and children happy. But I didn't, and I must suffer the consequences."

"Christ offers pardon freely; and the best of us have much to be forgiven. I hope you can love and trust the dear Saviour."

"I do that," answered the lonely man, a smile lighting up his face.

"Then you believe he has forgiven your sins."

Again the shadow, as the reply was given. "That don't seem possible, when I think how great my sins have been."

"But you must look away from your sins to Christ. You can never make your sins less. With all your sorrow, they will remain the same."

"You are right, Mr. Parsons, and the more I think of that, the blacker they seem. If my wife had lived, so I could make up to her, in some way, for my unkindness, I should have more hope of being forgiven. But I can't do anything for her."

“She needs nothing from you,” was the response. “It is a true saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. The same love which forgives one sin, can forgive many. Will you believe this?”

“I will try,” said Mr. Melvin, with a slight hesitation.

After some further interchange of thought in regard to this momentous question of forgiveness and justification, they spoke again of Phil. Mr. Parsons asked if he might inform the boy to whom he was indebted.

“Not yet,” replied the father. “Not until he wants to see me, and perhaps that will never be. If that time ever comes, you may tell him. You promised, Mr. Parsons.”

“I did promise, and I hold myself bound,” was the reply. “But if Phil ever expresses a desire to see you, I shall consider myself at liberty to tell him all.”

“Yes, you can tell him then,” said the father, sadly. “But I’m afraid that time will never come.”

His companion did not share this fear. On the contrary, some good spirit suggested to him a plan which promised success in bringing about the desired meeting.

William Parsons was to spend the Sabbath with a clerical friend, and Saturday morning bade adieu to Mr. Melvin. His thoughts were engrossed with the father and son, whose lives had been so strongly linked with his own, and during the afternoon, he gave his friend a brief outline of their mutual relation.

“Did you say the man’s name is Melvin?” asked his brother clergyman.

“That is his name,” was the reply, accompanied with a look of profound astonishment. “I didn’t know, however, that I had told you so much as that.”

“Neither have you,” said Mr. Austin. “I

recognized him by your description. I have heard of him before, or rather, I have heard of such a man at The Furnaces, and you told me you had just come from there. I knew there could hardly be two like him in the same establishment. But you need have no fears that I shall betray your secret."

"I have no fears of that," said Mr. Parsons. "I hope there will soon be no secret to betray. It troubles me, but I should like to know how and what you heard of Mr. Melvin."

"I have heard only good. There is a young man from our town at the Furnaces, who considers Mr. Melvin his best friend. He has recently made a profession of religion, and attributes his conversion to Mr. Melvin's influence. George Merrill, his name is. His mother was very anxious about him, for several years. There was danger that he would be dissipated."

"I am very glad to hear this," responded the visitor.

“And I am very glad to tell you. I have really wished to see Mr. Melvin. Mrs. Merrill would tell you much more than I have. She says he has saved her son from being a drunkard. If he has a son of his own, the boy ought to know what a good man he is.”

All this confirmed William Parsons in his determination to carry out the plan which had been so happily suggested. He hastened to Mr. Myers, where a large, noble looking boy, whom he would scarcely have recognized, was eagerly expecting him. Old, too, for his years, as well as large, was Phil Melvin, thoughtful and earnest; one of whom much might reasonably be expected.

“We shall be very sorry to lose him, although he needs better school advantages than he can have here,” said Mr. Myers. “If he was my own boy, I should send him away. I suppose you will take him with you.”

“That is what I intended, when I came on.

But something may occur to change my plans. I wish to do what is best for all."

Phil was anxious to go on with his education as rapidly as possible. Sometimes he thought seriously of giving up the idea of college, until he had earned more money. His fancied dependence was a great drawback to his happiness, notwithstanding Hugh Parson's assertion. This feeling was apparent to his guardian; indeed, he expressed it plainly, when he said, "I am getting old enough to work and provide for myself. I ought not to be dependent upon you any longer. You have been very kind, and I am very thankful."

"If I remember right, you once said you were willing to do as I thought best," was the smiling reply.

"Yes, sir, I did say so," replied Phil, looking steadily into the face of his guardian.

"And have you changed your mind?"

"No, sir. I am willing to do as you think best, now ; but I don't want to be a burden to you."

"You are not a burden to me, in any way," said William Parsons, throwing his arm around the boy. "Will you believe that?"

"Yes, sir," was the prompt reply, although it was evident that his faith was somewhat staggered.

"In a few days, I will tell you what I wish you to do. Perhaps I shall take you home with me. You could fit for college in our village."

Phil was about to speak as caution prompted ; but checking himself, said, "I should like to live with you, if you think best."

"That is well," responded his guardian with a smile. "You are improving, and I have no doubt we shall get on very well together. And now I have some news for you. I propose taking a trip to your old

home. I wish to see Mr. Wells, and I thought you might like to visit your mother's grave."

"Oh, yes, I should. I've thought about it ever so much. I know just where it is, out in one corner of the yard; and there was a little pine tree at the head of the grave. I looked at it the night I came away, and thought I should remember the place by that. When I am a man, I mean to have a nice white stone there. Mother told me how old she was, and I remember when she died."

"You would like to see Mr. Wells, too."

"Yes, sir. He used to put his hand on my head, and tell me I must be a good boy. Mother liked to hear him preach and pray; and he prayed for me when mother died. He asked God to guide my steps in the right way, and ——"

Here the boy's voice was checked, and tears came to his relief. It was seldom that one

saw him weep now; but the same gentle, loving heart beat in his bosom as had throbbed there when he sat at his mother's feet, and with smiles or tears, responded to the emotions which were mirrored in her face. Mr. Parsons did not chide him for this weeping, only as his sobs grew less frequent, spoke to him cheerfully of the proposed journey.

"I think we will go to-morrow. I should like to reach home in season for you to commence the next term of school. You will be the minister's boy there, and a good deal will be expected of you. Do you think you can meet the expectations?"

"I will try," answered Phil. "I will do the best I can. I shall see Mr. Hugh there."

"Certainly. His farm is only a mile from the village, and you may board there for the present, if Aunt Susan can be persuaded to take a boy into her family. She don't like boys. She says they are noisy, storming

about, and making more trouble than they are worth ; always getting into mischief, and upsetting the whole house."

Phil opened his eyes at this general description of boys, saying, "I don't think I upset the whole house."

"No, you don't look at all like it," was the reply. "I presume you and Aunt Susan would be the best of friends. Any way, we shall see," and Phil forgot his sadness, in thinking of this stranger aunt, who, by the way, was only a distant relative of the brothers.

Two days after, this company was expected at the parsonage occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Wells, and the good minister left his study somewhat earlier than usual, that he might be in readiness to receive his guests. The stage drove up to the door in dashing style, and the driver was careful to hear the names of the passengers he had left.

"I thought I couldn't be mistaken," he said to himself. "Melvin's boy, by Jupiter! And that oldest one is the man I brought up from the pine woods, most three years ago. Wonder what's in the wind now."

Tea was waiting for the travellers, and Mrs. Wells showed them at once to their rooms, where they might make themselves ready for the table. Mr. Parsons entered a large front chamber, while Phil was ushered into one of more modest pretensions.

He looked around in bewilderment, closed the door, that he might be entirely alone, and rubbed his eyes, as if to assure himself that he was not dreaming. Every article of furniture was familiar, from the high-posted bedstead, to the neatly braided rug before the yellow wash-stand. These had once been his mother's. He opened the drawers of the bureau, and it seemed to him that her hand must have arranged their contents. He had

often thought of all these which his mother had so much prized, and wondered what disposition had been made of them.

It was not strange that he forgot all else, in his surprise. His guardian called him before he had thought of brush and water.

“Oh, Mr. Parsons, these were my mother's things,” he said. “How did they come here?”

“I presume Mr. Wells can tell you,” was the evasive reply. “They look as if they had been well taken care of.”

“Yes, they must be just as mother left them. I wonder father didn't take them away. It seems so strange to see them here.”

“You can ask Mr. Wells about it. But now brush your hair, and wash a little of the dust from your face and hands.”

Their kind hostess urged Phil to eat, and as a matter of civility, he endeavored to do so. While riding, he had counted upon his sup-

per; but now that it was before him, he had no appetite. He was glad when they left the table, more glad still, when his guardian said to Mr. Wells, "Philip recognized the furniture in the room your wife assigned to him, and would like to ask how it came there."

"It was your mother's," said the clergyman.

"Yes, sir, I remembered it."

"Your father wished me to take care of it for you."

"For me, Mr. Wells?" the boy exclaimed.

"Did father do that?"

"Yes," was the reply. "Your father told me about it the evening before he went away, and his creditors were willing I should take the furniture home."

"Father owed some money," said Phil. "I heard mother talk to him about it."

"Yes, but he paid it very soon, and the furniture is yours. My wife thought you

would like to sleep in your own bed to-night."

"Yes, sir."

Nothing more could the boy say. He longed to be alone. The presence even of these friends was irksome. His guardian divined this, and said, "Perhaps you would like to go out and look around the village."

This was enough, and directly Phil Melvin was walking towards the cemetery. Unheeding the questioning gaze of those he met, thinking of his father, his mother, the past and present stood out in strong contrast.

In one corner was the grave he sought, but the pine tree was gone. There was a pure, white stone. He must be mistaken. But no! Chiselled in the marble was his mother's name, her age, and the date of her death. Who had anticipated part of his manhood's work, and placed here this fitting monument? Homeless, friendless, and despairing, he had stood there in the moonlight, by a nameless

grave. Who would have dreamed that three years could effect such a change?"

For the first time in all those years, something like love for his father stirred his heart. Did he wish to see this father? Not yet. He could not forget the unkindness which had embittered his sainted mother's life

He lingered here until the sun went down, and the chill of evening warned him that he should return to the parsonage. Mrs. Wells was standing at the door, waiting for his coming. "You did not lose your way," she said.

"No mam, I don't think I could do that. I have been to my mother's grave."

"I thought so. I knew you would wish to go there. Your father has placed a very handsome stone at her grave."

"Did father do that?" exclaimed Phil.

"Certainly, my child. Who should do it?"

"I don't know. But I didn't suppose father cared."

"He does care," said Mrs. Wells, earnestly, "and he cares a great deal for his boy."

"Does he care for me?"

"Indeed he does," replied the good woman, who was exceedingly anxious that the unnatural estrangement between Mr. Melvin and his son should be ended.

"I didn't know it," Phil replied, in an absent way.

"Then I am glad to tell you. You must think of your father as a very different man from what he used to be. He is sorry for all the wrong he has done."

"Mother said he would be, but ——" and here the boy shuddered.

Mrs. Wells thinking she had said quite enough, for the present, was content to leave him to his own reflections, and presently

the family was called together for evening worship.

When ready to retire, Phil asked his guardian to go to his room; yet when they were alone there together, the boy was silent.

"What is it, Phil? There is something you wish to say to me," said Mr. Parsons, after waiting for some time.

"Yes, sir. Father has put up a stone at mother's grave."

"I knew that he had," was the reply.

"And Mrs. Wells says he cares for me," continued Phil.

"Certainly he does. He loves you as well as any father loves his son."

"Oh, Mr. Parsons, how do you know?" cried Phil, sinking upon his knees by the side of his guardian.

"How do I know? I know it by his words, and his actions."

"Have you seen him?" sobbed the boy.

“Yes, I saw him less than a week ago, and I know that he loves you. He is bitterly sorry for his unkindness to his family. He says you are all he has to live for.”

“But he hasn’t me at all. I don’t belong to him; I belong to you. Please tell me about him.”

Then Mr. Parsons told how he had saved the life of Fred Bangs, told him all, from the strange voice which had been heard above the din of clanging iron, to the final rescue.

“And father did that,” said Phil, with a glow of honest pride upon his tear-stained face. “Wasn’t it a grand thing to do?”

“Truly grand; and the boy whose life was saved, loves your father.”

“Why, how could he help it, Mr. Parsons? I should love anybody who saved my life. I love the good black man, who found me in the pine woods, and I wish I could see him. I wish I could see father, too. But perhaps he wouldn’t want to see me.”

The expression so long desired had been uttered at last, and Mr. Parsons replied,

“Your father *does* wish to see you. I have known that for a long time, but he said I must not tell you.”

“He did! What made him do that?” asked Phil, eagerly.

Without answering this question, Mr. Parsons asked another. “Who do you suppose has paid your bills since I have had the care of you?”

“I suppose you, and Mister Hugh, and that black man. I have got the money all written down in a book, so I can pay you when I am a man.”

“You have nothing to pay me, or Hugh,” said his guardian. “You are in debt a few dollars to Bill Drock, and for the rest, you must settle with your father.”

“With my father! I don’t know what you mean.”

“I mean that he has paid your bills, and there is money in the bank for you, which he has earned. Do you believe now that your father loves you?”

“Oh, Mr. Parsons, why didn't you tell me this before?”

“Because your father made me promise never to tell you, unless you wished to see him, and I would keep my promise. I brought you here, hoping you would learn enough to make you wish to see him, and so give me the privilege of telling you this.”

It was past midnight when Phil Melvin lay down upon his own bed, yet not to sleep. He was going to see his father, and this thought was, in itself, sufficient to banish sleep. It was his father who had saved a human life; his father who had supported him, when he thought himself indebted to others.

He longed for the coming day. Never for him had morning dawned more brightly; and

yet his greeting to Mr. Parsons was subdued and half whispered.

Their host and hostess now spoke freely of what had transpired within the past three years, and Mr. Melvin's name was mentioned with respect.

"We should be glad to have him back here," said the clergyman. "He has been offered very generous wages; but Mr. Bangs says he shall never part with him, so long as money will secure his services."

To this, and much more of the same import, Phil listened, without presuming to offer a remark. Indeed, what could he say of one of whom he knew so little?

"I suppose you will go to college," said Mr. Wells, to his young guest, later in the morning.

"I should like to go," was the reply.

"Then there is nothing to prevent. Your father told me he would gladly pay your ex-

penses, if you should desire to go. I am glad the way is open for you. So many boys are obliged to work their way along, until they either break down in their health, or get discouraged. I was an exception. I had strength enough to go through; but it was pretty hard, sometimes. Mr. Parsons says you will be ready for college in three years, if you go on as you have commenced."

"I hope to be," replied the boy.

"And I rejoice in your good fortune. Your mother's prayers for you are answered. I never pass the house where she died, without thinking how kindly God has cared for her child; and I am happy to see you here. I hope you will go to your father, ready to forget everything unpleasant"

"Yes, sir," answered Phil; but even this allusion hurt him.

Before noon, he went again to his mother's grave, visited the old house he had once called

“home,” and entered the deserted rooms. He went into the loft, and there, hidden away in the darkest corner, he found some of his childhood's treasures, just as he had left them. The frames of two old chairs stood by the low window ; bundles of herbs, which he had himself gathered, still hung from the rafters, and two coarsely colored pictures, pasted upon the wall by his indulgent mother, had not entirely faded. After all, he had spent some happy hours in that small garret.

He brushed the cobwebs from the window, placed a board across one of the old chair-frames, and sat down where he could look out upon a landscape, little changed since he had sat there before. It was a homely place for the awakening of tender emotion ; but he was only a child, thoughtful and mature beyond his years, yet only a child. He gave a last look to all which reminded him of his childhood, walked through the village, up past the foundry, and then returned to the parsonage.

By this time, it was known that he was in town, and before night, several called at Mr. Wells', expecting to see him, more interested perhaps, than they would have been, had he needed their sympathy. But the object of their curiosity was gone, Mr. Parsons and himself having been carried, by private conveyance, to meet a stage which would take them to The Furnaces that evening.

Failing to see Phil, these people made ample amends for the want of sight, by a vigorous use of their tongues ; some expressing wonder at the way things had turned out, and others prophesying a remarkable future for the boy.

"I always knew he was smart, after he ran away," said one. "You know he was the best scholar in school. Good at home, too. Mrs. Melvin used to say he was handy as a girl about the house. For my part, I'm glad he's so well off; and 'twouldn't be strange if

Melvin should turn out a rich man, after all. I've heard of such things."

"And you say he haint seen his father all this time," remarked another, although Mrs. Wells had not said this, except in answer to a question which she could not evade. "Strange, ain't it?" continued the speaker. "I always knew there was something about Melvin different from other folks. I wonder what he'll say, when he sees his boy."

The boy wondered, too. In anticipation he lived over the meeting several times, but it proved different from what he had expected. Mr. Parsons thought best to stop at the public house, unattractive as it was to one of his taste; and here he left his ward, while he went to call upon Mr. Melvin.

"He's out, somewhere, with Mr. Bangs," said Mrs. Steele, in answer to the gentleman's enquiry. "Won't you come in, and wait for him?"

"Thank you. But I wish to see him directly," was the reply. "If you will tell me where I shall probably find him, I think I will not come in."

"I can't tell; but perhaps George knows. I'll ask him." Mrs. Steele disappeared for a moment, and then returned to say that George Merrill would go out and look for Mr. Melvin, adding, "You had better come in and wait."

Mr. Parsons had not long to wait. The man whose presence he desired, was soon found.

"You did not expect to see me again so soon," said the visitor.

"No, I did not. But I am glad to see you, for all that. Have you seen Phil since you were here?"

"Yes, I saw him not half an hour ago."

"What do you mean, Mr. Parsons? Is Phil in this town?"

"He is at the hotel," was the reply.

“But your promise.”

“I have not broken my promise,” said the young minister, with deep emotion. “Your son wished to see you, and I had no choice but to take him here.”

“Did Phil wish to see me?” cried the father. “Oh, my boy, is it possible? And he wanted to see me!”

Like a child, the strong man wept and smiled by turns, asking questions, without thought or care that they should be answered. “I must go to Phil,” he said at length. “I must see him. But how will he meet me?”

“Suppose he comes to you,” responded William Parsons. “It might be more pleasant for you both, to meet here in your own room.”

“Thank you for thinking of it. That will be the best way. Tell him to come, if he can forgive me.”

Phil was waiting impatiently, and with

valise in hand, sprang down the steps to meet his guardian. "Does father want to see me?"

"Yes, he does," was the quick reply.

"And shall I take my valise?"

"Yes, you can take it, and come with me."

Phil raised his cap, swept back the heavy hair from his forehead, and then, replacing his cap, nervously hurried on.

"A little more slowly, if you please," said his companion, smiling. "I can hardly keep up with you."

"Excuse me, sir; I forgot. I was thinking of my father."

At the foot-bridge, Mr. Parsons pointed to Mrs. Steele's house, and bade the boy go forward, adding, "I will follow at my leisure."

Mr. Melvin looked from the window, and seeing a boy crossing the bridge, wondered if it could be his Phil, so tall, broad-shouldered, and manly. Yes, it was. His breath came

thick and fast. Some one called for him at the door, and directly Mrs. Steele said, "Somebody to see you, Mr. Melvin," as she opened and closed the door of his room.

"Oh, my boy, my boy!" cried the man, and folding Phil in his arms, held him in a close embrace. "Is it possible that I see you once more?"

Their tears mingled, and yet the son had not spoken. At last, Mr. Melvin observed this, and said, "Speak to me, Phil. Tell me you forgive me. Oh, I am so sorry I ever struck you! Do forgive me, Phil, my darling boy. Speak! Speak!"

The boy's emotion then found utterance in words. "Don't say that, father. Let us forget, and let me thank you for all you have done for me, since I left you. Perhaps I didn't do right to go away."

"Never say that. You did right then, as you always have, and I was a wretch."

Up to this time, they had been standing. Now Mr. Melvin said, "Come, sit down in my lap;" and the arm-chair received them both. "Can you ever love me again?"

"Father!" — This single word, with a kiss pressed upon the quivering lips, was sufficient answer.

There was a long silence, during which Mr. Melvin caressed his son with touching fondness. The better nature of this man had begun to assert itself, when he was cut off from family ties. Now it was such a pleasure to feel that there was some one to love him.

In the happiness of the moment, he said to Phil, "You shall never want for anything which money can give you. I am willing to work for you day and night, if necessary. Oh, I wish your mother could have lived."

At mention of his mother, the boy sobbed audibly, and resting his head upon his father's shoulder, wept without restraint.

Mr. Parsons, who had intentionally lingered, came up the walk, and seeing Mrs. Steele at the window, entered her room.

"Do tell me if that is Mr. Melvin's boy," she said instantly, in a low voice.

"Yes, mam, it is," was the reply.

"Well, I thought it must be, though he never told me he had a boy. But take a seat," she said, moving forward a large rocking-chair. "I heard, some way, that Mr. Melvin had one child. He's a nice looking boy."

"He's a noble boy," responded Mr. Parsons. "Any father may well be proud of him."

"He's got a good father, too," said the woman. "I don't know what Mr. Melvin's done, in the course of his life; but he's a good man now. There ain't a workman in The Furnaces can compare with him in any thing. He earns more money than anybody

else. Where has his boy been all this time ? ”

“ He has been at school.”

“ Well, perhaps somebody else could take better care of him than his father could alone ; but I suppose his father has supported him.”

“ Certainly ; ” and William Parsons was very glad to answer this question in the affirmative.

“ I never believed that story,” now said Mrs. Steele to herself, triumphantly. “ I knew Mr. Melvin was no such man.” But she remarked aloud, “ They seemed glad to see each other, and I’m glad his boy has come. I like the looks of him.”

There was opportunity for a long conversation before these two were interrupted. Both Mr. Melvin and his son seemed to forget that the world contained any one but themselves. After the first emotion awakened by their meeting had somewhat spent itself, there was

so much to be said, that time passed unheeded.

At length Phil starting up, exclaimed, "Why, father, where do you suppose Mr. Parsons is? He came with me to the foot-bridge."

"I never thought of him," was the reply. "I never thought of anybody but my boy. I will go and see if I can find him."

No sooner, however, had he opened the door of his room, than the door opposite was opened, and Mrs. Steele's good motherly face appeared.

"More company for you," she said. "Mr. Parsons has been waiting a good while."

"I hope you will excuse me," said Mr. Melvin, turning to the gentleman who had been waiting. "I have been so much engaged ——"

"No need of an apology," interrupted the visitor. "I have been well entertained, and

I have no doubt that your time has been agreeably occupied."

"You may well say that, Mr. Parsons; but I ought not to have forgotten you. I shall be glad to have you go into my room now. Phil is anxious about you. Please go and see him, while I speak with Mrs. Steele."

No sooner had Mr. Parsons left the room, than she remarked, "So that's your boy."

"That's my boy," replied the father, a flush of pride mantling his cheek.

"And a nice looking boy he is," was the response. "I hope he's going to stay with you a while."

"I don't know about that. He must go to school, and Mr. Parsons knows better about it than I do. But I guess they both of them would like some supper."

"Strange I didn't think of that before," said Mrs. Steele. "I'll have supper ready in a few minutes; good as I can get in a hurry."

"And they'll both stay all night," said Mr. Melvin.

"To be sure. I thought of that."

The supper was good. Mr. Parsons was persuaded to spend the night, and George Merrill was dispatched to the hotel, for his valise.

In the morning Phil told Mrs. Steele, in answer to a question, that he had slept well, while his father laughingly remarked that he watched.

"Watched for what?" asked his landlady, failing to understand his meaning.

"I guess I watched *with*, instead of *for*," he replied, as he looked down upon the boy, who sat next him at the table.

For almost the first time since he came to The Furnaces, Mr. Melvin indulged himself in a holiday, nearly every moment of which was spent with his son.

"I am ready to resign my charge at any

time," said William Parsons, when speaking of Phil, who looked from one to the other, as though half doubting to which he belonged. "I don't mean that I am tired of Phil. He has never given me any trouble; but you have a natural claim upon him."

"No, Mr. Parsons, I don't wish to assert my claim," was the reply. "I love Phil, and am willing to work for him; but I don't know as well as you do what he needs. He ain't like me, and I'm glad of it. I want him to be the best man, and the best scholar he can be. You can help him, and I can pay you for what you do. I shall like that way best, if you are willing to keep him. I'm sure Phil would rather stay with you."

The boy rested both hands upon his father's broad shoulders, but made no reply. "The sight of your face would do me good, every day," continued Mr. Melvin, addressing him. "But I must consider your best interest.

This is no place for you. I can work here now, with good courage, and you will try not to make trouble for Mr. Parsons."

"I will do the best I can; but I shall want to see you, father."

"Shall you, my boy? Thank God for that. You shall come to see me, some time. I will send you money, and you shall come."

During the day, Fred Bangs made the acquaintance of Phil Melvin, and gave an enthusiastic description of his rescue from drowning, saying, in conclusion, "I should rather be *your* father's boy, than anybody's except my *own* father's. I hope I shall be as strong a man as he is. They all say he is the strongest man at The Furnaces, and I know he is the best one. Ain't you going to stay here now?"

"No, I am going back to school. Father says it is best; but I am coming here to see him."

It being decided that Phil was to remain under the care of Mr. Parsons, it seemed desirable that they should hasten their departure, in order that he might enter school at the opening of the term. Mr. Melvin acquiesced in this, and made more definite arrangements for the remittance of money for his son's expenses. He made, also, a generous allowance for pocket-money, which Phil was to spend at pleasure. "You see I am going to trust you," he said. "I am sure you won't disappoint me."

The visit was short, yet long enough to accomplish the purpose for which it had been made. A burden was lifted from two hearts.

Phil Melvin was henceforth secure in the love and care of one who was strong to do, and counted himself most happy to bestow; while the father returned to his work, with a strange feeling of exultation. For one wrong done he was forgiven; and when he opened his Bible, a new light shone upon its pages.

Was it possible that the whole dark record of his life could be blotted out by the blood of Christ?


His heart overflowed with love to God and man. Nothing seemed hard to him. He saw the face of his wife, wreathed with happy smiles.

He loveth most to whom most is forgiven.

CHAPTER VI.

Living for others, not for himself,
Hoarding up treasures, careless of self,
Growing in goodness, earnest in prayer,
Trusting God's mercy, safe in his care.

Thus life was redeemed from sin and shame,
And Heaven secured, through Jesus' name.

 OPE you don't expect me to stay here with a boy storming round the house," said Aunt Susan Blake. "If you do, you'll find yourself mistaken, Hugh Parsons. I can't put up with boys no how. Never see one in my life, but made more trouble than he's worth. Keep the floors tracked with mud, and dirty the house from one end to the other."

The young gentleman to whom this was ad-

dressed, listened with an amused smile, making no attempt to answer until the speaker had concluded. Then he said, quietly, "Perhaps you had better wait till you have seen this boy. You may find him a great help. I told you he was a model of excellence."

"You told me he was a boy," was the response. "Boys are pretty much all alike."

"Well, Aunt Susan, there must be boys in the world, if there are to be men; and I don't believe even you, smart as you are, could keep this farm going, without some man on the premises."

"I don't want to keep the farm going. It's enough to keep the house going, and cook for so many men, without having a boy round."

"Perhaps so; but Phil is coming tomorrow." And saying this, Hugh Parsons went to his library, where he was sure of being undisturbed.

He was glad that Phil was coming. It

would give more variety of life at the farm, and it would be pleasant to note the changes which time had wrought in him. But Aunt Susan regarded this proposed addition to the family as a great misfortune; and if another home had offered, she would have left at once.

Had Mrs. Myers heard this woman talk, she would have said that such a person was unworthy to live in the same house with one so kind and gentle as this boy, whom she loved almost as though he were her own. It was a sad day for her, when she parted from him, knowing that he would never return as he went.

“Good bye, mother,” he said, kissing her again and again.

Mr. Myers held his hand, looking down into the clear, hazel eyes, and saying earnestly, “If you ever need a friend, come to me, as you would to a father.”

“Yes, sir, and I thank you for all ——”

“Not a word of that, my boy. It is no time to talk of that.”

Then the children clung to him, begging him to stay, and weeping in anticipation of their loneliness. All this was hard for Phil. His attachments were strong, and he had reason to love every member of the family.

For some time after commencing his journey, he had no thought for his fellow passengers, or the country through which he was travelling. Gradually, however, the feeling of oppressive sadness wore away, and he began to look forward to the future. Mr. Parsons, who had made no effort to rouse him from silence, yet welcomed his first appearance of cheerfulness, and pointed out whatever was likely to interest him.

Before he reached his destination, he had quite conquered all desire to indulge in gloomy revery. He was not going where all

were strangers. Hugh had written that a room was ready for him at the farm. He was not dependent, either. He said this over to himself, with a feeling of gladness which made him strong for any effort.

“Write to me for anything you want,” said his father, when they parted. “Don’t deny yourself anything that will make you happier. I want you to dress as well, and have as much as any boy in school.”

This would have made some boys extravagant; but it could have no such effect upon Phil, who had trained himself to habits of rigid economy. He was not likely to abuse his father’s confidence.

“Why Mister Hugh!” he exclaimed, as descending from the stage, the first face he looked upon, was that of his friend.

“Plain Hugh, if you please,” was the laughing response. “You are so tall, now, you can leave off the Mister. And you,

brother William, how are you ?” he added, as the minister turned from some of his parishioners, who chanced to be passing at that time.

“ Perfectly well, Hugh ; and I hope you are well, also.”

“ Yes, brother, I am enjoying the same blessing, heartily ; and I’m glad to see you back again. I always feel like a drifting boat, when I’m away from you ; and then again, I expected nothing but I should be obliged to preach, if you were gone another Sabbath.”

By this time, good Deacon Baker and his wife came to the door to welcome the minister, who boarded with them ; so there was no opportunity for a suitable reply to the above speech.

“ And this is the boy I have heard called Phil Melvin,” said Mrs. Baker, extending a soft, warm hand to the stranger.

“Yes, mam, this is my boy,” responded William Parsons, while Phil, removing his hat, made a graceful bow, in acknowledgement of the introduction.

Then the deacon must needs speak to him, looking sharply to see what manner of boy he was.

“Now come right in, and have some supper,” said the motherly woman, who looked smilingly upon the group before her.

“But I had no intention of stopping to supper,” responded Hugh. “Aunt Susan will be expecting us.”

“Let her expect,” said the deacon, laughing. “She may as well be disappointed as my wife. Perhaps better. At any rate, supper is ready, and we have depended upon you to help eat it.”

Aunt Susan Blake had made up her mind to begin with Phil as she could hold out. She was going to lay down the rules to him

plainly, at the outset of their acquaintance. So she prepared supper, without making any addition to the ordinary fare ; indeed, Rachel Jones, a young girl who assisted her in the kitchen, thought the supper was plainer than usual, and ventured to remark it.

“ You don't suppose I'm going to get up any knick-knacks for that boy, do you ? ” retorted the housekeeper. “ You won't catch me doing that, I tell you. It's bad enough to have him here, and I calculate to let him know his place.”

Miss Susan Blake was very desirous that people should know their place, and keep it, as her assistant could testify.

“ I heard Mr. Parsons tell you that the boy don't depend upon charity. His father supports him, and pays his board. For my part, I'm glad he's coming, and I mean to learn something from him.”

Having said this, Rachel Jones made her escape to the dining-room.

When time for supper, the workmen came in; but the young master of the house failed to make his appearance. Just at night, he came driving up with Phil, took the boy's trunk from the wagon, and carried it into the chamber adjoining his own.

Rachel managed to be in the hall as they passed through, and was introduced to the new comer; but Aunt Susan never stirred from her post. She had "too much sense to run after a boy;" yet she was disappointed not to see him.

Hugh Parsons went into the room where she was sitting, but did not mention Phil's arrival.

The next morning they met at breakfast, Phil coming in from the library, as though at home. The workmen pronounced him good looking. Before night, they all agreed that he was smart, this having been proved in the field.

Aunt Susan Blake observed that his hat was in its proper place, when not on his head ; and his shoes were thoroughly cleaned after he had been in the field. During the whole day, she found no occasion for scolding, or laying down rules. Hugh Parsons, who had taken Phil into confidence, telling him the best course to pursue, heartily enjoyed her discomfiture. "She'll come to terms ;" he said to himself, laughing at some observation he heard her make to Rachel. Phil neither upset her work-basket, nor slammed the doors. He didn't even whistle ; but then, she was sure this wouldn't last long.

"It ain't to be expected," she said. "He'll show out before he's been here a week. I never knew a boy act so, and I ain't to be cheated this time."

The third day after his arrival, the house-keeper was in her worst humor. Nothing went to suit her. The bread was burned, a

hen had stolen her nest, and come off with a large brood of chickens; the yeast wouldn't rise, and the clock stopped, so that everything was half an hour behind time. Poor Rachel received conflicting orders, until she was nearly crazed; when, to crown all, the stove was upset.

“There, I might have expected that!” exclaimed Aunt Susan. “I told Hugh when he had the stove set on blocks, ’twould be down in less than a week, and it’s just as I said. (The stove had been set more than a year, and until now had stood firmly.) If anybody knows what’s going to be done, I wish they’d tell me. There ain’t a man within quarter of a mile of the house, and that stove’s got to be righted, or there won’t be any supper here to-night.”

Fortunately the stove was so tightly closed, that no fire could escape; but the excited housekeeper, in snatching up the tea-kettle,

poured some boiling water upon her foot. Vexed before, and now suffering from pain, she dropped the kettle, and but for Rachel's presence of mind, might have been still more badly scalded.

At this moment, Phil, who had been reading in the library, made his appearance, and understanding at once what had happened, set about repairing the mischief. He turned his attention first to Miss Blake, asking if she would put her foot into cold water.

"I don't know," she answered, sharply. "I wish somebody would do something for me, without stopping to ask questions."

Phil wasted no more breath on that subject, but brought a basin of water, into which the smarting foot was plunged.

"Now you had better take off your stocking," he said, and Rachel having recovered her wits, offered her assistance.

The foot was not very badly scalded, not so

badly as the sufferer had thought. She ordered some raw potatoes and a knife to be brought, and Rachel sprang to bring them, when Phil said, "Tell me where to find them, while you prepare a bandage. I can scrape potatoes, if I can't do anything else," he remarked with a smile, which went far towards putting matters in a more cheerful light.

He proved his ability to scrape potatoes, having it ready in the shortest possible time, and Aunt Susan was somewhat mollified. But there was the stove "upset," and smoke was beginning to issue from the disjointed pipe.

"Oh dear! I don't know what's going to be done, unless one of you go to the field, and get somebody to set up that stove again. I shouldn't wonder if it needed two to do it."

"We will see about that," was Phil's quiet response. "Perhaps it won't be necessary to call any one," he added, after a short examin-

ation of things. "Rachel, if you can help me a little, I think we can have it all right;" and she obeying his directions not to lift much, the stove was soon righted, and the pipe jointed, without any great exertion on her part.

"I declare, you've done that well," exclaimed Miss Blake. "I shouldn't believed any boy could do so well as that. Now Rachel, you mop up, and we can get supper in good season, after all. We never should done it alone, though, if I hadn't got hurt. Won't you hand me that potato, and I can scrape it myself. I won't trouble you any more; and I'm sure I'm much obliged to you for what you've done."

"You are very welcome," replied Phil. "My mother brought me up to help others; and I am stronger than most boys of my age. Rachel will need some help about supper; and I would be very glad to lay the table, or do anything else that is necessary."

"You lay a table! Did you ever set a table in your life?"

"Yes, mam, a great many times," was the laughing answer. "I can wash dishes, too."

All this time Aunt Susan was scraping potatoe diligently, more to hide her confusion than because there was any immediate need of it. "Well, Rachel can tell you what to do," she said at last.

Just then William Parsons came into the kitchen, saying, "I thought I would keep on, until I found some one. Aunt Susan, how do you do?"

"Not very well, this afternoon," she replied. "We had bad luck with the stove, and I scalt my foot in the muss."

"What happened to the stove? It seems to be all right now."

"Yes, your boy there fixed it up again."

"Glad to hear that, Phil," said his guardian, turning to him with a smile. "I like to have you useful."

“Yes, sir ; and I like to be useful.”

“I have known that, ever since I first saw you,” was the response. “I knew Aunt Susan would find it out in good time. She don’t like boys very well ; but there are exceptions to all rules, and I expect you will get to be the best of friends.”

“There, that’s just the way. If I ever say anything, it always comes back to me when I don’t want to hear it. I wish I had never said a word about boys in my life.”

“No harm done, Aunt Susan. Phil won’t lay up anything against you. I’ll go into the library now, and rest a while, till Hugh comes up. I wish to see him, and I think I’ll stop to supper.”

“You can stop, William, and we will do the best we can for you. I should be glad to get something nice, if it wasn’t for my foot.”

“Don’t trouble yourself,” said Mr. Parsons, taking his ward’s hand, and going to the li-

brary, where they had a pleasant chat about home, school, and various other matters.

“I suppose you have written to your father.”

“Yes, sir,” answered the boy. “I wrote him a long letter yesterday. Oh, how good it seems to have a father! I didn’t know what it was until now. I wrote him such a long letter, I don’t know but he’ll get tired before he finishes reading it.”

“You might ask him.”

“Yes, sir, I did; and I told him if it was too long, I would write him a shorter one next time. But I promised to help Rachel get supper. Will you excuse me?”

“Certainly. Go and do all you can.”

By this time, Aunt Susan, who was determined that she would never put poor bread before the minister, had commenced making some biscuits, which would be “good enough for anybody.” She still suffered with her

foot, but she bore it resolutely. Phil went out at the right time, and rendered efficient aid, so that supper was ready in season.

After this there was some laughing over the success of Hugh's plan for giving his young friend a position in the family, and then the matter dropped.

School commenced the following day, and at an early hour Phil Melvin presented himself before the Principal for examination. It is hardly necessary to say this was satisfactory; and he was assigned to a class whose members were much older than himself. Here he could do his best, and he resolved that this best should be such as would gratify his most exacting friends.

He made his mark at once. His recitations were remarkable for their correctness, while out of study hours, he was a genial, merry companion. There would have been much curiosity in regard to him, had not Mr. Parsons

said, with no appearance of mystery, that he was taking charge of the boy's education to oblige his father.

School days have been so universally enjoyed, and so graphically described, that I am sure my readers will pardon me if I pass rapidly over those of our hero. Yet some incidents affecting him must not be unnoticed.

The autumn after he entered the academy, his guardian was married, and Phil found a new friend in the young wife who presided so gracefully over the minister's home. From his generous allowance of pocket-money, he had reserved a sum to be appropriated at this time, so that he was able to make a suitable present to the newly wedded pair; and his father, too, improved this opportunity for giving some substantial proofs of gratitude.

Aunt Susan was again in trouble, she fearing that Phil would stop in the village with William, rather than walk out to the farm ev-

ery day. "I declare I shall give up if he does," she said to Hugh Parsons. "It seems as though the whole family had gone when he is. I never see such a boy. He's as good as a minister, and a good deal more sensible in some things."

Good and happy ! These two adjectives described Phil ; for in all the school there was not a happier boy than he. He had so many friends, and best of all, such a father, who was never tired of reading the longest letters, or doing the hardest work.

"I am thinking of visiting you before winter," he wrote, and the letter containing this bit of intelligence was hardly received, when Mr. Melvin appeared. He was a welcome visitor, carrying in his face and manners credentials which ensured him the respect of all with whom he came in contact. Dividing his time between village and farm, a week passed quickly and pleasantly. Praises of his son

from teacher and guardian, gave him intense satisfaction, and he was happier than he had ever been before in his whole life.

“I used to curse luck for all my trouble,” he one day said to Mr. Parsons, “but I should never think of attributing my prosperity to luck. I see now that there has been a kind providence in it all.”

“Then you can but thank God for it.”

“Yes, I do thank God,” was the reverent reply. “Since that night after Phil came to see me, in the spring, I have done this, and every day I am more thankful. If I was ever so poor and destitute, I think I could be happy when I think of how much Christ has done for me, and I deserve nothing.”

“Then you are a Christian,” responded the young clergyman.

“I try to be, though it seems too much for one like me to be called by that name. I try to do my duty, and I believe God will give me

strength to persevere. Oh, when I look back, and see how recklessly I went on towards ruin, I wish I could warn every young man in the land against intemperance. I should rather see Phil in his grave, than see him do as I have done. Sometimes I think of this till it haunts me, so I can't rest."

"You need never had any fear for Phil, in that respect," said his guardian. "He is very firm where principle is concerned, and no one would think of urging him when he had once repulsed. He was trained by a Christian mother, and is actuated by the highest motives."

"Yes, he had a Christian mother. Thank God for that!" exclaimed the father, with much emotion. "Whatever there is about him that's good, he owes to somebody besides me. It hurts me when I think of this. But I do believe God has forgiven me," added Mr. Melvin, more cheerfully; "and I pray that everything may work for Phil's good."

"I don't doubt that it has," replied Mr. Parsons. "He has more friends than almost any boy of his age."

"And not a relative has he seen since his mother died, except myself. I think sometimes, I shall try to hunt up my sister. It wouldn't be strange if she has had a hard time. Children that are given away as she was, don't generally fare very well. I ought to have done something for her; but I almost forgot I had a sister, till lately, and now I don't know where to look for her."

"You might probably trace her, by taking sufficient trouble."

"Yes, I might, and I might do her some good, too. When I can do good to anybody, I think it makes up a little for the wrong I've done. I don't mean it atones," he hastened to say, "but it helps make my life good for something."

"Our lives are all good for something, if we will make them so."

“I know it. Everybody can do some good, and I ought to do a great deal. There's one man I want to see more than anybody else in the world, since I've seen Phil this time.”

“And who may that be?” asked Mr. Parsons, smiling at the abrupt turn in the conversation.

“Bill Drock. I want to thank him for all he has done for my boy; and I want to pay him, too.”

“Don't try to do that, Mr. Melvin,” was the reply. “You would deprive him of a great deal of happiness, if you should offer to refund the money he has spent for our boy, as he calls him. I think he was greatly disappointed when I wrote to him that you had resumed the support of Phil, so there was no more need of his doing anything.”

“How much did he spend for our boy?” asked Mr. Melvin.

“I don't know exactly. Phil can tell you.

He has kept an exact account. It was only a few dollars ; but Bill calls it his investment, and the best one he ever made, if things turn out as he expects. He will have nearly as much pride in Phil's success, as you or I can have."

After this, the same subject was discussed between father and son ; the latter exhibiting a letter he had recently received from his black friend. "It won't do to send him money now," said Phil. "I know just how much I owe him, interest and all."

"How much is it?" asked his father ; and the little account book was produced, in which every cent was duly accredited. "Suppose I invest that amount of money for him, where it will bring good interest. Then you can pay him any time when you please. How should you like that?"

"I should like it very much," was the reply. "But in that case, you will pay him, not I. The money will be yours."

A grave shake of the head, and a single word of expostulation answered this remark, so that Phil was never heard to make another of similar import.

This visit over, there was little to mark the life of Phil Melvin, beyond the ordinary routine of study and exercise. His home was still at the farm, where Aunt Susan welcomed him every evening, unless a storm, or some particular engagement detained him in the village. Then the house was "so lonesome," she was "most crazy."

"What are you going to do, when he goes away for the long vacation?" asked Rachel, one evening, when the rain came down in torrents, and there was no boy in the house.

"I don't know," was the sharp reply. "I don't see any need of talking about that, now. It will be bad enough, when it comes."

It came, as all anticipated days will come, for good or evil, and Phil bounded home to

place his books upon the shelf, and pack his trunk for travelling. He was going alone, this time, and with a long journey in prospect, would need all his wits about him, as Hugh Parsons said.

"Yes, sir," he answered, "I'll try to have them within call."

Quite a party of scholars started with him, but before night, he was left with only strangers; and from that time, until he reached The Furnaces, he saw no familiar face. Mr. Melvin was expecting his son, and stood at the door of the little cottage to welcome him.

"Growing still," he said, after their first greetings were exchanged.

"Yes, sir," was the smiling reply. "People say I shall be as large as my father, if I keep on."

"I hope you will, my boy, and as strong. But be sure you use your strength to good purpose.

Mrs. Steele had supper in readiness. She anticipated this visit as though the guest was to be one of her own family, and she said this in such a kind, motherly way, as gave Phil great pleasure.

"Do you know just how much your expenses have been, for the last year?" asked Mr. Melvin, when alone with his son.

"Yes, sir; I have kept account of every cent I have spent. Would you like to know?"

"Yes, I should."

The sum was much less than many boys would have expended, as Phil had no extravagant habits. He dressed well, bore his full part in all school expenses, and provided himself with everything necessary for a student; but he neither smoked, nor indulged in late suppers.

"Mr. Parsons has put the rest of the money you sent into the savings bank," said the boy.

“That’s right. That would be something to depend upon, if I should be taken away. But I’ve found somebody else I ought to do for. At least, I’ve heard about her; your aunt, my sister.”

“Why, father, I didn’t know you had a sister!”

“I almost forgot it myself. She was given away, when I was small, and I haven’t seen her since. The family she lived with moved away. I’ve just found out where she lives, and she is very poor. She has been married, and her husband is dead. A good thing for her that he is dead, too. He was a drunkard; and a drunken husband is a curse to any woman. She has two little girls, one six and the other four years old, and she does all kinds of work to support them.”

“Can’t you help her?” now asked Phil, his voice expressing the utmost sympathy.

“Yes, I can; but I didn’t know how you

would feel about it. The money I spend for them would be yours. You won't have so much if I help them."

"I don't care for that, father. Did you think I would? Why, I should rather work, and have you help them."

"I'm glad you feel so. But there's no need of your working. I can earn enough to take care of you all. Your aunt lives not many miles from Mr. Myers; and I suppose you want to go there before school begins again."

"Yes, sir; and now you can go with me and see Aunt — What is her name?"

"Eliza. Her name is Eliza Brown. I had thought of your plan; and the sooner it is carried out, the better. If you are ready, we can start to-morrow morning, as well as any time."

Of course Phil was ready. He had heard often from Mr. Myers's family, and written

them long letters ; but this was not like seeing their faces.

Mr. Melvin had a long talk with Mrs. Steele that evening, called upon Mr. Bangs, to say that he should be absent for a few days, packed what was necessary, and the next morning, started in search of a sister, whom he had never seen since she was a wee, toddling thing.

Phil reached his destination first, and the father had an opportunity to witness the welcome he received. There was only time for a hasty introduction, and an equally hasty invitation to come there on his return, when the stage went on.

It was late in the afternoon when Mr. Melvin accomplished his journey, and standing at the bar of the hotel, asked if any one could tell him where Mrs. Eliza Brown lived.

The bar-tender looked at him curiously, taking a survey of his person and dress, as he

said, "There's a woman by the name of Brown lives about half a mile from here, but I guess she ain't the one you mean. I don't know what her name is. Her husband died a year or two ago."

"And his name?" suggested the stranger.

"Was William," said the young man. "Everybody always called him Bill."

"His widow is the one I wish to see," remarked Mr. Melvin.

"Well, I can tell you where she lives. Keep along up the road, till you come to a guide post on the right hand side. Turn off there, and go on a piece. Then turn to the left. It ain't very far to the house. It's small, and there's an old buttonwood tree in front of it. That's where Bill Brown's widow lives."

Thanking the bar-tender for this information, Mr. Melvin made his way through a group of men, who seemed to have no busi-

ness beyond watching him. He followed the directions given, and found the old button-wood, standing like a sentinel to guard the wretched dwelling. Two children sprang up from their play, and he noticed that their faces and well patched garments were clean, and as they entered the house, he caught a glimpse of a slight, pale faced woman.

A rap brought this woman to the door. "Does Mrs. Eliza Brown live here?" asked Mr. Melvin.

"That is my name," she answered.

"Then I am your brother. Do you remember me?"

"No, sir. They told me I had a brother, but I don't remember anything about you. Won't you come in? It's a poor place; but it's my home, and the best I can provide."

Mr. Melvin had too much good sense to expect that his sister would welcome him with affection. If she had heard of him, it

could have been nothing good ; yet it must be confessed that a different reception would have pleased him. As he always entered at once upon the business in hand, he did so now.

“I have been trying for several months, to find where you were. I heard you were a widow, in needy circumstances, and I have come to help you.”

“Help me !” she murmured, her eyes filling with tears. “I didn’t know there was anybody in the world, to help me ; and my life has been very hard. If it wasn’t for them children, I shouldn’t try to live.”

“Don’t cry, mama, now,” said the youngest child, coming up to her. “Nellie and I are good.”

“Nellie !” repeated Mr. Melvin, “that was the name of my baby.”

“Then you are married.”

“I have been married ; but my wife is dead ; and I have only one child living ; a boy fourteen years old.”

"What is his name?" asked the poor woman, with a slight manifestation of interest.

"Philip. He was named for me, but he isn't like me. I'm glad to say that, though lately I try to do as well as I can."

"You've been different from what you are now. I heard from you, when grandmother Washburn was alive. She told me."

"And, of course, she didn't tell you anything good, if she told the truth about me. I've been a hard drunkard."

"Then you were poor," responded Mrs. Brown.

"Yes, poor enough," was the reply. "If a man wants to be poor, let him drink liquor; and in ninety cases out of a hundred, he'll spend every cent he earns. But I didn't come here to talk about that," resumed Mr. Melvin, after a short pause, during which he glanced hastily around, to see what this poor home contained. One thing gave him pleasure. It

was scrupulously clean; floor, ceiling, and scanty-furniture. "I want you to tell me how you are situated. I am able and willing to help you."

"I work hard, and fare hard," answered his sister, controlling herself, with an effort. "My husband didn't leave me anything, and I've had to do the best I could. But it don't seem as though you were my brother, come to help me. It's too good to be true. When I was young, and used to see other girls with their brothers, I thought about you a good deal; but since then I've had other things to think of. I buried my three oldest children."

Mr. Melvin now addressed himself to his little nieces, who had regarded him with a mixture of fear and curiosity. It required but a short time to win their confidence, and they were soon seated in his lap. This sight touched their mother's heart, and she expressed a sense of her brother's kindness.

"It was very good in you to think of me," she said.

"I don't know about that," was the reply. "It seems to me very natural, and very strange that I didn't think of you before. I hope we shall be good friends in future. We ought to be. We had the same mother. If she had lived, we should both been different."

"Yes, perhaps we should. I've wanted to live, so my children could have a mother."

"How would you like to live with me, and be my little girls?" asked the uncle, looking into the fair, childish faces upturned to his.

"I shouldn't like to leave mamma," quickly replied one.

"But suppose we take her along, too. Do you suppose she would go?"

"I don't know. Please you ask her, and see. Wouldn't she have to work there?"

"Not so hard as she does now. I guess we must talk to her about it."

Up to this time, Mrs. Brown had quite forgotten that hospitality demanded she should offer some refreshment to her guest ; but now it suddenly occurred to her, and she commenced at once preparing supper. "I haven't much to give you, except a cup of tea, with bread and butter," she said, apologizing for her scanty fare. "I wish I had more. You should be welcome to the best, if 'twas ever so good,"

"Then I'll take the will for the deed," replied her brother. "I've eaten a good many poorer suppers than this, when I furnished them myself."

At the table, over a cup of tea, Mrs. Brown's reserve vanished, and she spoke frankly of her situation.

"Well, sister, I came here to take you and your children to live with me, if you will go," said Mr. Melvin, when she had concluded her story.

“I have been boarding for four years with a good woman, who thinks she is getting too old to take boarders any longer. There is room enough in the house for us all, if she keeps three rooms for herself. That will make us pretty near neighbors: but we can get along, if we keep good natured.”

Mr. Melvin had heard such a report of his sister, and was so favorably impressed with her appearance, that he was ready to make this proposition without further delay, and I need hardly say that it was accepted with gratitude. Before time for retiring, he knew precisely how matters stood, and governed himself accordingly. Only a small part of her furniture was of sufficient value to be moved. The remainder was bestowed upon one poorer than herself, and thus two hearts were gladdened. There was no reason why the moving should be postponed, and in less than a week Mrs. Brown said good-bye to her old friends and neighbors.

Phil Melvin had been apprised of this, and met his father at the village hotel, where "the stage stopped to change horses." There he was introduced to his aunt and cousin, who had heard so much of him, that they felt already acquainted.

"I want you to go, too," said Nellie.

"I am coming," was the reply.

"In two weeks, at the longest, Phil," said Mr. Melvin. "I can't spare you longer than that."

"Yes, sir, I will be there," and Mr. Myers' family, dearly as they loved this boy, were obliged to yield to the claims of his father.

When Phil returned to Mrs. Steele's, there was a general rejoicing. Mr. Melvin had once more a family about him, and devoted himself to their comfort. His nieces ran to meet him, when he came towards the house, clapping their hands as he lifted them in his strong arms. Mrs. Brown had commenced

housekeeping in a small way, although dependent upon her kind neighbor for most of her conveniences.

"Now, father, you must have that furniture from Mr. Wells," said Phil. "You need it."

"But that belongs to you," was the reply. "I have nothing to do with that."

"Then let me have it here, will you? It would seem more like home to see what was mother's."

"Certainly. I will send for it, if you want me to," and in compliance with Mr. Melvin's request, Mr. Wells forwarded it at an early day.

Before vacation was over, housekeeping was fairly established. Some repairs were made upon the cottage, and within there was a bountiful supply of all things necessary for comfort. Mrs. Steele had decided that two rooms would be sufficient for her, so long as she had "such accommodating people to deal with."

"I suppose I could afford a better house than this," said Mr. Melvin to his son. "But I am detetmined to see you well through college, before I think of luxuries. Then Mary and Nellie must be educated. So I shall be economical, for the present."

"Well, don't work too hard, father," was the kind response.

"No danger of that, my boy. Why, just look at me. I am only forty-three years old, and can do more work now, than I could ten years ago. It's a pleasure for me to work. You just study, and not trouble yourself about work or money. I'll take care of them. That part belongs to me. I wish it was best for you to stay with me; but I know it isn't."

"You won't be lonely, now you have aunt and the children."

"Not so lonely as I have been; but I shall miss you. You must write often, and long letters, too."

These long letters never failed to appear when expected, and were prized nearly as much as the presence of the writer would have been. The months which had seemed so long in anticipation, passed quickly for all, and Phil Melvin was again at home, well, happy, and a brilliant scholar.

“No airs about him, though,” said one of the workmen, when speaking of him. “He looks more like his father, the older he grows; and if he don’t make a mark somewhere, I’m mistaken.”

Mr. Bangs held him up as a model for his son, who was far behind Phil in point of scholarship. Fred couldn’t understand how anybody could like books so well, without being a regular bookworm. He calculated to have a good time as he went along. No use in studying every minute; and for his part, he wouldn’t do it.

“You going to be fitted for college, next

year?" he asked one day, when talking with his young companion.

"I expect to be," was the reply.

"And then you will be only sixteen. You will be through college at twenty."

"That is my intention."

"And what next? I suppose you will study a profession."

"I should like to do so. But that will depend upon circumstances."

"Then what is there to prevent? Your father says you can do what you please; and my father would give half he is worth, if I would dig away at books as you do."

"Then why not do it?" asked Phil.

"Because it's stupid business, when there's too much of it. I can learn fast enough, when I try; and if I keep up with my class, that will answer for me. I suppose you mean to come out number one."

"I mean to learn all I can. There is no danger of knowing too much."

“No, only make a good use of your knowledge, as the old folks say; and you are sure to do that. You will be a great man in more ways than one.”

Phil bowed and walked away as this was said. He had an engagement with his little cousins, whom he never disappointed; and, moreover, the half reckless tone of his companion but illy accorded with his feelings.

Fred Bangs had been considered a good boy, when under his mother's influence; but away from her, his manners had changed. Mr. Melvin saw this change sooner than his parents, and endeavored to win the boy's confidence. For some reason, however, Fred was less frank with his friend than formerly, and avoided all personal allusions. Phil, who met him constantly, suspected where lay the trouble, yet found no opportunity to remonstrate, when remonstrance would have seemed wise. The time might come for this, yet was not now.

Meanwhile Phil Melvin was off on a pedestrian tour, as he laughingly called a walk, which had for its goal Mr. Wells' parsonage. His valise was sent on by stage, and he set out leisurely, intending to make some calls by the way.

His father preferred that he should ride, insisting that there was no need of taking such a tramp. "Better save your strength," he said.

"But if I should enjoy it, father."

"Then go along," was the laughing response. "Get all the enjoyment you can, in a proper way."

"Yes, sir ;" and so the matter was settled.

Bill Drock was going in from work one evening, when he saw a young man coming towards the house. "Wonder who that can be!" he said to himself. Just then the stranger lifted his hat, and Bill shouted, "Halloo! Here's our boy, most grown up."

“ Yes, sir, grown up quite a ways,” was the reply. “ How do you do ? ”

“ Hearty and happy. Glad to see you as ever I was to see anybody. How did you get here ? ”

“ Walked, part of the way.”

“ How far have you come to-day ? ”

“ From The Furnaces.”

“ Guess you are tired, then. Come in, and sit down.”

“ I am not very tired. I have had several invitations to ride, so I walked less than I intended.”

“ Well, sit down, any way. It does me good to see your face ; and my old woman will be glad to see you, too. She thinks most as much of you as I do ;” and this last remark was emphasized by another handshake. “ Forgot the old pine woods ? ”

“ No, indeed ; I shall never forget them. I intended to go through them to-morrow, if I can find my way.”

“Not to-morrow,” replied Bill. “We must fish to-morrow. Here, old woman!” he called. “Come in here, and see who we’ve got for company.”

“The old woman,” was somewhat abashed, in the presence of such a gentleman, as in her estimation, Phil Melvin had grown to be; yet she managed to say that she was glad to see him, and would get some supper, “just as quick as she could.” Her visitor begged that she would make herself no trouble; and suggested that a bowl of bread and milk would be sufficient.

“Guess I can do better than that,” she answered, hurrying back to the kitchen, where she felt much more at home than she could with company. Bill followed her, and knowing just what the boy liked, helped to prepare it.

After full justice was done to this supper, Phil Melvin talked, while his host listened, only asking an occasional question.

"There's a good deal of difference between things now and five years ago," he said at last by way of comment. "The Lord has prospered you, and I'm glad of it. You don't look much as you did the first time I see you. Your father's a good man, too. I always inquire about him, every chance I have. It don't seem as though it could all be true."

"I know it seems too good to be true," responded the young man. "God has brought good out of evil. I shall never forget what my feelings were when I lay down in the pine woods, hungry and tired. The world looked very dark to me then. And you were my first friend. If the time ever comes, when I can repay you, I shall be grateful for the privilege."

"Don't talk about that," said Bill with a gesture of impatience. "I haint done what I meant to. Your father turning out so, upset my plans. But 'twas all for the best; only I

should like to feel that I was doing some good in the world."

One day was devoted to fishing and eating, as Phil afterwards said, and then his black friend accompanied him through the pine woods, seeing him safely on the way to his old home.

Here he was quite a hero, receiving so much praise and attention, that it somewhat troubled him. Yet thankful for all kindness, he only sought to make himself more worthy.

His mother's prayers were answered. She had prayed that he might be a Christian ; and standing by her grass-grown grave, he consecrated his life to the service of that God, whom she had taught him to love and reverence.

CHAPTER VII.

Onward, upward, no delay,
Never tiring on the way,
Never resting on the plain.
Thus the summit one shall gain,
And looking back, in triumph sing,
All praise, all glory to our King.



COMING out number one. This was what Phil Melvin intended to do, and what all who watched his course in college expected he would do. Yet it was not mere ambition to be first, which prompted his efforts. He had resolved to do his best, let others do what they might. Few traces could be seen in him of the boy who had wandered out into the world eight years

before, doubting, fearing, and oppressed with a vague sense of loneliness and isolation.

Between his father and himself, there had grown up an attachment which was a marvel in its way; deep, tender, and confiding. If aught could make amends for the cruel harshness which had embittered his childhood, it would certainly be done; and it was this very seeking to make reparation, which gave to every act of his father a peculiar tenderness.

What others might give to their sons grudgingly, he gave from the abundance of his great love, with a joyous heart. Every advance of his son seemed to him like a victory which he had himself helped to win. Not expiating, not atoning. Oh, no! He never dreamed of doing this. There was no offsetting the good he had accomplished over against the evil he had wrought; yet it was an intense satisfaction to feel that his whole life was not wasted.

There, too, were the dear ones at home; the children, who called him uncle, loved him as a father; and the sister, to whose face his kindness had brought back something of the freshness of youth. People forgot to talk of the time when he had been a drunkard; and there was no longer need of its remembrance.

Phil shrunk from all allusion to old days. He had ceased looking to Mr. Parsons as his guardian, although still counting him next to his father, his dearest earthly friend. The villagers, among whom he had spent three years, were proud of their minister's boy, and still retained their interest in him, even now, when at the parsonage there was a wee bit baby boy, who claimed much of care and attention.

At the farm changes had taken place. Aunt Susan had resigned her position, in favor of one younger and fairer, who presided at the table, dispensing tea and smiles right pleasantly.

Mell Parsons, as her husband called her, had not expected to be a farmer's wife; but wherever Hugh was, there she could go and be happy, though his hands *were* harder, and his cheeks browner, than when an ambitious student, he had told her of his hopes and plans. She had done much to reconcile him to the forced abandonment of these plans, and now made his home so happy, that he was more than content.

He charged Phil to do enough for two, in college; to see there was no vacancy in the list of scholars, because he had failed to write his own name among their number. "And remember that half your vacations belongs to us," he said, at parting. "We have been too much together, to separate entirely now; and then again, we shall want to see how tall you are."

Mr. Melvin never thought money wasted which added to his son's happiness; so he

cheerfully furnished funds for travelling, and Phil spent part of his summer vacation with his friends, in Western New York.

“When, where, and how do you expect to stop growing?” exclaimed Hugh Parsons, at first sight of Phil, after a year's absence.

“I expect to stop at six feet,” was the laughing reply. “That is the height of my ambition. When I have attained that, I shall be satisfied.”

“Satisfied!” repeated the young farmer, “I didn't know this was possible for you. You are always pressing upward and onward.”

“And who helped me to do this? Who told me there could be no resting on the plains, no lagging in my steps, if, somewhere in the future, I would reach the mountain summit which lies nearest heaven?”

“Yes, Phil, I remember I used to talk in that strain; and the words stir me, even now,

as you repeat them," said Hugh Parsons, with a half audible sigh. "I don't envy you; but I *do* wish it had been my lot to keep pace with you. See to it, Phil, that you give fitting expression to your gratitude for all this strength, mental and physical. He who wears a crown, should take care that not a jewel is lost. I have seen so many crowns robbed of their jewels, that I sometimes fear for all. With health and strength, all things are possible to him that strives. Isn't that a glorious truth?"

"Indeed it is, and the longer I live, the more I wonder that so many sell their birth-right for a mess of pottage. You may smile at that, brother Hugh, if you will," added Phil. "I know I am young; but one year in college has made some revelations to me. Why will those who might be all that is noble and good, degrade and abuse themselves? It is a wonder to me."

“And I hope will remain so. It is a wonder to all right-minded people. The boys and young men of our country have much depending upon them; and yet they waste their time.”

“They do worse than that. They spend their time in forming habits which will ruin them, soul and body; then talk of injuring their health by close application to study.”

“Charity, Phil! There are not many like you.”

“Perhaps not; thanks to those who forewarned and so forearmed me. But what do you think of a young man who says, ‘I know such a course is wrong, and I am a fool for pursuing it,’ yet still goes on in the same way?”

“I am obliged to think of such, often,” replied Hugh Parsons. “There are plenty of them all about us. I know of two within half a mile. They are occasionally intox-

icated, although of course, they feel this to be wrong, and are deeply mortified in consequence. Yet they lack the resolution to give up, entirely, the use of liquor. Nothing but total abstinence will do for them; and there is no safety for *any* one, except in that."

"I am safe there," rejoined his companion. "I don't know the taste of liquor or tobacco. My mother used to talk to me about them; and I promised never to touch them."

"It is well that you did. If every mother would bind her sons with such a promise, sure they would never forfeit it; the jails and prisons of our land would soon be without an inmate."

"Yes. Father says that rum drinking causes more crime and sorrow, than all other agents combined."

"And I believe it," responded Hugh Parsons. "We need apostles of temperance, to go through the length and breadth of our

land, preaching this sad truth, and calling upon all men, everywhere, to stay this tide of evil."

Another year, and Phil Melvin had learned still more of the sacrifices which are offered at the shrine of Bacchus. He saw many laying down health, strength, purity and manliness, only to be mocked with the hollow laugh, and sickening embrace of their idol. Yet thoughtlessly and recklessly these sacrifices are made, as when in a great carnival, the choicest treasures are scattered, without thought for the future.

"We can't always stop to count the cost," said one young man, when Phil asked him if it paid to indulge in wine drinking, and other kindred habits.

"Well, if you can't stop *always*, I suppose you can, at least, stop *once*," was the answer.

"Yes, I suppose I could. But the fact is, I shouldn't enjoy the reckoning; and dollars

and cents are of but little account, after all. What difference will a few hundred, more or less, make fifty years from now?"

"I was not thinking of dollars and cents," said Phil. "You are paying more than that, if I see correctly. You are paying, too, what is not your own."

"What is not my own! What do you mean, Melvin? My head is tolerably clear, just now, but I don't see that."

"I mean that you have friends, whose hopes and affection you are bartering."

"How so?"

"If they love you, they wish you to do your best, and ——"

"Yes, I see," exclaimed the young man. "But when I am through college, and settled in the world, I shall have something else to do, beside sit with pipe and wine, till two o'clock in the morning. There'll be work to do then. Don't preach to me, Melvin," he

added. "I know all, just as well as you do. Better too; for I've tried it. But I can't change now. I really envy you your untrammelled life; but I can't imitate you just yet. You are coming out ahead of us, and you deserve it. Most young men are very different from you."

It was useless to say more, and Phil walked away, as another student joined his companion.

"What is it?" asked the new comer. "You look as though some one had lectured you. It couldn't be Melvin. That isn't his way."

"No, he didn't lecture me. He only asked a question; but I know what he meant. He don't believe in drinking wine, and making a fool of himself, as some of the rest of us do. Just look at him. Did you ever see a finer looking fellow! He don't know what it is to have a racking pain in his head, and a horrid

nausea in his stomach, all because he guzzled wine and smoked, until he knew no more than a log. Bah ! It makes me sick to think of it, say nothing of the real experience I have passed through. I haven't made a respectable recitation since that last supper, and yet my good mother thinks I am injuring myself by too close application to study. It's a shame to deceive her, but it must be done."

Must be done ! Why must it be done ? Because the good mother's heart would be overwhelmed with grief, did she know the truth. Pity it is, that so many add falsehood to their other sins, in the vain hope of concealing their recklessness.

Phil Melvin had nothing to conceal. His life was open to the scrutiny of all ; and the better it was known, the more he was respected.

At the opening of his junior year, Fred Bangs entered, as Freshman, the same college with himself. Two years behind, for no

reason, except a want of application to study, which would have injured him far less, at the worst, than did the falsely called pleasure, in which he had indulged.

His father knew this, his mother feared it, and to both he was a source of anxiety. Mr. Melvin, who had once saved him from drowning, sought now to save him from a more terrible death, and in the kindest manner remonstrated with him. He listened respectfully. He could not do otherwise; and yet he thought himself wiser, in some things, than this friend, who had learned, by experience, what madness it is to barter all which man holds dear, for slavery and wretchedness.

Fred Bangs never dreamed of being a drunkard. No! He despised a drunkard. But he thought it manly to talk of killing time, drowning care, and quickening thought, when each moment of time was precious, when he had no care to drown, and thought was but dulled with wine and tobacco.

“ So different from what I expected,” said his father. “ You will break my heart,” said his mother ; and their remonstrances seemed, for a while, to produce some effect.

When he entered college, the friendship of Phil Melvin was of great advantage to him. It was something to be known as the friend of one so universally popular. But, unfortunately, two of his old associates were there, and they of the worst. They were by no means ready to give him up. He had been a jolly fellow, spending money freely, and it was worth while making an effort to retain him.

At first, the novelty of his position, and a natural ambition kept him under restraint. He studied well, proving his ability, and making it certain that he could accomplish whatever he attempted. For nearly an entire term, his conduct was unexceptionable, and his parents flattered themselves that he had thoroughly reformed.

Without intruding, Phil managed to wield a strong influence, and this being all upon the right side, it would have been difficult to resist.

Perhaps he relaxed his vigilance, or Fred's old companions, fearing they should lose their prize, became more in earnest. Certain it is, that in what was literally a dark hour, the young man was induced to join a party, whose purpose was neither profitable nor honorable. That it was an affair to be concealed, only gave it more zest ; and the prime movers had abundant reason for congratulation that their principal object was attained.

Indeed, they accomplished more than they desired. Fred Bangs once with them, carried himself with a high hand, and became thoroughly intoxicated. More boisterous than his companions, he made himself more conspicuous, and when, a few days after, the young gentlemen were arraigned before " the

powers that be," to answer for disorderly conduct, he was most severely reprimanded.

Mortified and vexed at what he considered the injustice of this, he was ready to throw off all restraint, and appear in the character of a fast young man. Another expedition was planned, with still greater secrecy. But some one was on the alert, and again the participators were brought to judgment. Sentence, however, was delayed. Investigations were to be made, and Fred feared he should be sent home in disgrace.

For the last few days, he had purposely avoided Phil Melvin. Now he sought his friend, with the determination to acknowledge everything, and ask advice.

Phil was seated in his well furnished room, wearing a handsome dressing-gown, which, with slippers to match, had been presented to him by Mrs. Hugh Parsons, and which his college friends declared just suited his style.

Some one had said that a smoking-cap was needed, to complete the suit ; but for this he had no need. He neither smoked himself, nor allowed any one to smoke in his room.

This was considered an odd whim of his, and so it might be. But he had a reason for this, which he would not have revealed to the most intimate of his college companions.

He did not forget his mother. He remembered her with an affection which made her seem near to him, and everything pertaining to him was arranged as though she was to see and pass judgment upon it. If no other reason for this, the air which he breathed, even in the privacy of his own room, must be pure ; and the habits in which he indulged must be such as she would approve.

This fancy, if fancy it was, too sacred to be spoken, had been a most powerful influence to keep him from everything which would have marred the purity of his life.

He was not studying on the morning when Fred Bangs sought him. He had laid aside his book to think, think of the very person who appeared before him.

“Good morning. Glad to see you, Fred,” he said. “Take a chair, and make yourself comfortable. I was just wondering where you were to be found.”

“I didn’t know but you were going to say you wondered where I had been the last fortnight.”

“No, not that. I might have wondered why you have not been here in all that time.”

“I know it, Phil. The fact is, I’ve been making a fool of myself, and it wouldn’t be strange if I should be sent home in disgrace.”

“Not so bad as that, I hope,” was the response. “It would be a great trial to your father and mother.”

“Of course it would ; and I’m a great trial to them, any way,” said Fred Bangs, in a tone

which expressed more than his words. "I almost wish your father had let me drown. That would have been an end of me."

"An end of you!" repeated his companion. "By no means. It would have been an end of your life on earth, but —"

"Yes, Phil, I know what you are going to say. Mother talks like that, sometimes."

"And you don't enjoy it," said Phil.

"No, I don't. It does well enough for a fellow like you; but I am of a different stamp."

"Yet the stamping has been done by yourself. At least, whatever there is, other than it should be. Nature left an impress of nobility."

"Don't shame me by talking in that way, Phil. I used to have some pride in this *me*, but it's all gone; and, to tell the truth, I came to you not for a sermon, but advice."

"I have no wish to preach a sermon, Fred.

Remember that you put the words into my mouth, and I could hardly do less than speak them."

"Yes, I suppose you are right in that, as in everything else. But I am in a bad scrape, and I don't know how to get out. If I was well out of this, I would turn over a new leaf, and try my powers in another direction."

"Would you? Would you give up drinking?" asked Phil, looking at his companion earnestly.

"Yes, I would, and be glad to. I wouldn't go through another night like the last one, for all the sprees I could crowd into a life time."

"Give me your hand on that, Fred, and I will see what can be done for you."

The young man extended his hand, and clasped that of his friend. "You mean that," added Phil Melvin. "You will not taste another drop of liquor while you are in college."

"That is what I mean, and I'll be hanged if I don't keep my promise," exclaimed Fred, with his characteristic impetuosity.

"Then go back to your room, and prepare your recitations. You have nothing to fear."

"But I don't see how this promise will help my case now."

"No matter if you don't see it. It will help your case in future, and the present will soon be over."

Fred Bangs sat for a moment longer; then rising said, "Thank you for doing me good, Phil. I didn't deserve it; but I appreciate it."

"No need to talk of that," was the smiling reply. "Come here, at any time, and we will see how matters progress. Good morning."

The door closed, and Phil Melvin was left alone again, to think, rather than study.

Fred Bangs heard nothing more of reprimand or punishment; although for the re-

mainder of the term he felt himself closely watched. His friend guarded well his secret. Only two knew of the pledge which had been made, although many wondered at the change in his conduct. At home, during the vacation, Mr. Melvin finding him in a confidential mood, introduced the mooted question of intemperance or abstinence, and was surprised to hear from him an acknowledgment that he had been entirely wrong.

“I thought myself very wise, the last time I talked with you,” said the young student, gravely. “But I found out my mistake, and I promised Phil not to touch another drop of liquor while I am in college. Didn’t he tell you?”

“Certainly not. He wouldn’t consider himself at liberty to do so. I know that Phil has felt very anxious for you; and a day or two ago, he told me that you were all right. But he said nothing of any promise.”

“Isn't he a noble fellow?” exclaimed Fred, in reply to this. “I wish I was half as good as he is. Did he ever do wrong in his whole life?”

“I don't suppose his conduct has always been perfect in the sight of God; but he never did wrong to me,” answered the father. “There were three years when I didn't see him.”

“I know, and I've wondered a great many times, how you could live apart so long. The love between you seems different from that between most fathers and sons.”

“Yes, it is, and there is reason for it. Would you like to know the reason?” asked Mr. Melvin.

“If you choose to tell me,” was the reply.

“I *do* choose to tell you, because I hope it may do you good;” and then this man, whom Fred Bangs loved and respected next to his own father, told the story, vague rumors of

which he had before heard. "Now do you think it strange that I believe in total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks?" asked the speaker, in conclusion.

"No, sir, I don't," was the emphatic answer. "But it don't seem possible that all this can be true. I always thought you so good and kind."

"And now I have lost your respect. Is it so, Fred? That would be hard; but if my story teaches you a lesson, I don't regret telling you."

"No, no, Mr. Melvin, I do respect you, and thank you for telling me this. It *shall* teach me a lesson, and I love you all the more for trying again to save me. Just see," added Fred, with a sorry attempt to smile, "I am only a great foolish fellow after all; ready to cry, as I used to when a child."

Tears answered to tears. Mr. Melvin had not humiliated himself in vain. Fred Bangs

was more firmly established in his newly adopted principles ; and when tempted to forego them, the memory of this revelation would make him strong to resist. His old companions found both ridicule and entreaty wasted, while his parents rejoiced, giving honor to whom honor was due.

“ I have thrown away two years of my life,” he said, when after Phil Melvin’s graduation, the two were comparing notes. “ I don’t pretend that I could have equalled you in all things, but I might have been through college now, if I had studied as I ought.”

“ Don’t look back in that way. You might be in a far worse condition than you are now, had you entered college when I did. As it is, you have nothing to regret, and everything to hope. Your father is in no haste to have you through with your education.”

“ No ; he thinks twenty-two young enough for me to commence business. I am not to

study a profession, like my friend, Phil Melvin."

"Then that is settled."

"Yes, I am ambitious; but I don't love books well enough to spend my life with them. Some active business will suit me better. You go ahead, and perhaps I can give you a push when you come before the people, as an aspirant for office. Everybody says you were made to talk."

"And work," added the young graduate, shrugging his shoulders, as a smile lighted up his noble face. "I need a great deal of hard work to use up my surplus strength."

"And you'll do it. No danger in regard to that. What is the first thing to which you will devote yourself?"

"I am going to look up some relatives of whom I have heard."

"I wish you much joy in the search. If you find them as desirable as your Aunt Brown

and her children, you will be well repaid. I think your cousin Mary is the sweetest child I ever saw. I only wish she was older."

"And so do not I," replied Phil, laughing at his friend's earnestness. "I have some plans for my cousins, and hope to be established in a profession before their education is completed. I wish to contribute my mite."

"Your father won't thank you for that. He considers himself able to do all that is necessary."

"I know he considers himself so, and he seems to be ; but for all that, I must have something to do in the world, and I love my cousins as though they were my sisters."

"What if another should take your aunt and cousins, too ? I heard mother speaking of a gentleman who seemed quite anxious to do this ; and she thought Mrs. Brown would consent, if it was not for leaving your father alone."

“Is that so?” asked Phil, with a look of surprise. “It is news to me.”

“Then don’t betray me as a news-monger. Only keep your eyes open, and you may see for yourself.”

Phil’s eyes were always open, and it required but a short time to see this. Indeed, his aunt took him into her confidence, and talked with him frankly.

“If there was any prospect of your father marrying again, I shouldn’t hesitate,” she said. “But it seems wrong to leave him alone, after all he has done for me and the children. I wanted to talk with you about it, because you understand your father so much better than I do.”

“Thank you for trusting me,” answered Phil. “I am sure father would wish you to consult your own happiness. He is far from being selfish.”

“I know that,” was the reply. “It seems

to me he is about as good as any body can be. He has never let me or my children want for anything since he came here."

What Phil saw, Mr. Melvin saw, also ; and desired his sister to do as she pleased, without reference to him.

"And what will you do?" she asked.

"I am not sure in regard to that," he replied. "Don't consider me at all in the matter. Mr. Weaver is a good man, and will give you a pleasant home."

Matters had progressed thus far, when Phil Melvin went from home, for the purpose of visiting his mother's brother. Two or three years before this, the post-master of the town where they had formerly lived, received a letter, asking news of Mr. and Mrs. Melvin. This letter had been forwarded, and answered ; Phil then intending to improve the first opportunity of making the acquaintance of his uncle's family.

Various engagements had prevented this, until he completed his college course. He had visited William and Hugh Parsons each summer, and twice spent a day with Bill Drock, who still moved on in his lowly path, with patient tread and thankful heart.

There now seemed nothing to prevent the long contemplated journey. Seth Reed was the name of Mrs. Melvin's brother, and after reaching the town in which he resided, Phil was directed to his house.

The appearance of this, in the distance, was not prepossessing; neither did it prove more attractive upon closer inspection. Small, old, and weather-beaten, it had known neither paint nor white-wash. A scraggy apple tree was its only shade. There were no blinds, and with a midday sun shining down upon it, it was suggestive of any thing rather than rest and comfort.

Thus Phil saw it, and at once decided that

his visit would be short. He had not expected to find an elegant dwelling, but this was worse than he had allowed himself to fear. He walked on, however, and presently caught sight of a face peering through an open window, which riveted his attention. It was a child's face, but so like his mother's, that he hardly suppressed an exclamation of astonishment."

His eyes still fixed upon this face, he rapped at the door for admittance, and a coarse, slatternly looking woman appeared.

"Does Mr. Seth Reed live here?" asked the stranger.

"Yes," was the reply. "Won't you come in, and sit down. He's in the field now; but he'll come in, pretty soon."

"Is his wife at home?"

"His wife's dead; died six months ago," answered the woman. "You'd better come in, out of the sun. We ain't fixed up for

company," she added, pushing aside a basket, and snatching a soiled towel from the best chair in the room.

By this time, the child had finished her observation out of doors, and was looking earnestly at the gentleman who had seated himself near her.

Phil, whose quick sensibilities recognized one akin to himself, extended his hands towards her, saying, "Come to me, little one."

"I can't," she replied.

"But I love little children; and I have some cousins at home who always sit with me. Come."

"But I can't," again said the child.

"She can't walk," explained the woman. "She hain't never been very strong; and something seems to be the matter with her about walking. I don't know what 'tis, but I guess she'll get over it."

The hard tone in which this was said, showed how little sympathy might be expected from the speaker.

“What is your name?” now asked Phil.

“Mary Melvin Reed,” replied the child, slowly, as though pleased with its sound.

“She was named for her father’s sister.”

Without appearing to notice this remark, the young man rose and took the child in his arms, saying, “You are my cousin, little one, and I have come a long way to see you.”

“Have you? Then I’m so glad. There don’t anybody come to see me, now mother’s dead. I want to see mother.”

This last was whispered with a furtive glance at the woman, who stood mute with astonishment.

“Be you that child’s cousin?” at length she found voice to ask.

“I am, if she is a daughter of Mr. Seth

Reed. My name is Philip Melvin, and my mother's name was Mary Reed."

"Well, here comes your uncle," was the reply, as a hard-featured elderly man came into the room.

Phil introduced himself with little ceremony, and received as cordial a welcome as could be expected from such as his host.

"There ain't much about you looks like Mary," said the man, after scrutinizing the features of his visitor. "You look more as your father used to, if I remember right. But it's a good many years since I saw him, and I suppose he's grown old, like the rest of us."

"He has grown old," replied the son. "But he is not an old looking man, for his years."

"He must be about fifty."

"Yes, sir, yet he seems in the prime of life."

"Then he's turned over a new leaf, since I

saw him. Somebody I saw last winter told me he was getting forehanded. I'm glad he's been so lucky. For my part, I've had a pretty hard time. Your mother wrote to me about taking you ; but I guess you've fared better than you would with me. You look as though you had."

"I have fared well," answered Phil Melvin.

"Got through college?"

"Yes, sir."

"And now what? Going to be a minister?"

"No, sir, I intend to study law. I had thought of the ministry ; but all things considered, I believe I can do more good as a lawyer."

All the time, he had been unconsciously threading the tangled hair of the child in his lap ; she seeming content to rest with him.

"Has Mary made friends with you, so soon?" asked the father. "She's generally shy of strangers."

"I make friends with all children," was the reply. "Mary's face attracted my attention when I saw it at the window. It is like my mother's."

"Yes, I've thought so a great many times. She don't seem to be very well; but I guess she'll outgrow it."

Dinner was soon ready, and with some awkward apologies for not having anything better, the visitor was invited to take a seat at the table. Mr. Reed spent the afternoon in the house, and really made an effort to do his best. He talked of his children, who were living in different places, no one being with him except Mary.

"I've got one boy that wants to be a scholar, and I don't know but he'll make out," said the father. "I give him his time, and he manages to go to school part of every year. He's most as large as you are, and ain't sixteen yet. He worries a good deal

about Mary, and says she ought to see a great doctor ; but I hain't got money to spend that way."

Poor child ! She needed to have money spent upon her ; yet more than all, did she need love and tenderness. If Phil Melvin had been established in his profession, he would have taken her away with him, and given her all which she required. As it was, he made himself sure there would be no objection to this, and returned to his father, to report what he had seen and heard.

" And you would like to provide for Mary."

" Yes, sir, I should."

" Well, then you can. Your Aunt Eliza and her children are going to leave me, and I shan't have anybody to work for but you."

" So Aunt Eliza is really to be married."

" Yes ; and I don't know which Mr. Weaver thinks the most of, her, or the children. I told her she ought to leave one of

them with me ; but he says he must have them all."

"And what are you going to do, father? I really wish you were married." Phil had been thinking much of this, since his aunt mentioned the subject, and now spoke impulsively, without quite realizing what he was to say.

"*Do* you wish so, my boy?" asked Mr. Melvin. "Would you be willing to see any one in your mother's place?"

"I should, if you would be happier," was the reply. "You say this is the place for you, and I cannot live here with you. You are too good to be alone in the world."

"But I have always felt that everything I have, belongs to you. It is the joy of my life to earn money for you. I didn't feel at liberty to do anything for your aunt, without consulting you."

"My dear father!" exclaimed Phil, his

eyes filling with tears, as he grasped his father's hand, "I thank you for all you have done for me ; but in one way, each of us must live for himself. God willing, there are many years before you, and I am no longer a child. I need only my profession, and it is not necessary that you should give me even that."

"But I *shall* do it, Phil," rejoined Mr. Melvin. "I wouldn't miss it for my life. And I want you to find a place for Mary Reed. If your aunt was going to stay with me, we'd have her here."

It was not easy to find the right place for this child ; but good will, perseverance, and money accomplished it. She was where her uncle could visit her each day, and the care of her helped to compensate him for the loss of his sister's children. To her father, and the woman whom he now called wife, the child's absence was as grateful as was her presence to others ; so that all parties were satisfied.

Every life Mr. Melvin helped to brighten, was so much gained to himself; and when somewhat more than a year after the above conversation, he erected a well-appointed house, it was one who had known much of sorrow whom he installed as its mistress. A gentle, loving woman, having few family ties, she gladly accepted the charge of Mary Reed, and gave her love unstinted. A happy family was this; happier, still, when the son joined them, and occupied the room which had been fitted up with especial reference to his tastes. There were then, father, mother, son and daughter; and although Mrs. Melvin was at first, somewhat ill at ease in the presence of the young man who addressed her as mother, his kindness and respect soon reassured her.

“I am so glad to have you settled in life, father,” said Phil, with a smile. “It will be pleasant to think of you here; for I know you are happy. Now I can go out into the

world with a brave heart, and make a way for myself."

And he did do it; a shining way, too; the light of which irradiated the paths of others who trod near to him. The time came when he could repay all those who had given him assistance in his hour of need. He won both fame and money: and, although in his own home were wife and children, for whom he provided lovingly and generously, this exhausted neither his heart nor hand. William Parsons remained in the village where he had first settled, and for many a luxury in the way of books and journeys, he was indebted to his former ward. The expenses of his eldest son's education, were entirely defrayed by this friend; and their families, with those of Hugh, who had become a wealthy farmer, were as closely united as though bound by the ties of blood. The push which Fred Bangs had promised his companion, was never re-

quired. He had only to watch and congratulate, although his own position was such as made him of service to many others.

All who knew the history of our hero, rejoiced in his success; and none more so than did Bill Drock, who was each year gladdened by some token of grateful remembrance. The money invested for him by Mr. Melvin, had accumulated until it was quite a respectable sum; yet he knew nothing in regard to it. He sometimes talked with his wife of an investment he had himself made years before, calculating its returns. "I thought there was something more than common in that boy the first time I saw him," he would say, with a wise shake of his head. "I only wish I'd done more for him, and I should if I'd had a chance."

The last visit the Hon. Philip Melvin made his black friend, was when the latter was confined to his house by an attack consequent

upon exposure to wet and cold. "You see, I can't do as I used to," said the old man. "I never looked to be laid up like this; but it's all right, and I tell my old woman the Lord will provide for us."

"Yes, he will; and you must allow me to be the almoner of his bounty," answered the visitor. "You told me I should pay you for what you have done for me, when I could earn more money than you."

"I don't remember of saying it; but I suppose I did if you say so. I don't want you to give me money, though."

"Who should, if not I? God wills it, and you believe in doing his will?"

"Yes, I do. But ain't it strange that the little boy I found in the woods should turn out to be a great man like you, and come to find me tied to the house, when I was so strong then?"

"Perhaps it is strange. But remember

that you have helped to make me what I am. Now it will be one of my pleasures to provide for you and your wife, whatever you may need."

"Well, it's strange," murmured the old man. "I've talked a good deal about my investment, but I didn't expect 'twould turn out so. I shan't say any thing against your doing what you're mind to, but I'd give more to have you pray with me, than I would for all your money. I can't kneel down with you, but God knows."

Philip Melvin was a king among his fellows; but the crown he wore was that of a Christian; and the jewels which bedecked it, was the souls of those for whom he prayed and labored.

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
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